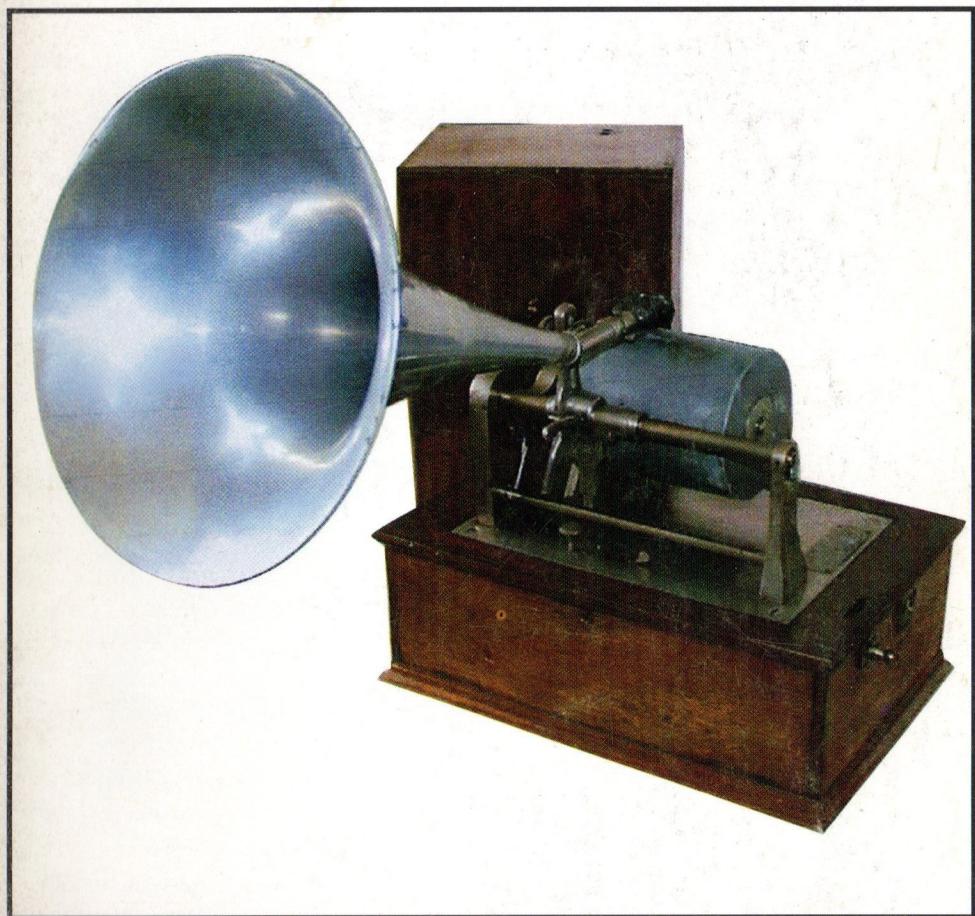


# Hillandale News



No. 234, Summer 2001

# Calendar of Forthcoming Events

This calendar covers CLPGS events and those organised by third parties likely to be of interest to members. Information is supplied here in good faith, but the Society and its agents take no responsibility for errors, omissions, or changes to programmes beyond its control.

|                           |                                |                                      |   |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| <b>JULY 2001</b>          | Saturday,<br>7 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>CLPGS<br/>West of<br/>England</b> | ALL-DAY EVENT; commencing 10.00 for 11.00, to be hosted by Paul Morris and others; beginning at 27 Blackall Road, Exeter; thence to the Exe Canal, for the BOAT TRIP & BARBECUE at the Turf Hotel, Exminster. Evening finish. |
|                           | Sunday,<br>15 <sup>th</sup>    | <b>CLPGS<br/>Northern</b>            | PORTABLE PICNIC at Alston Hall.   |
|                           | Tuesday,<br>17 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>CLPGS<br/>London</b>              | Barry Raynaud – ‘THE GEISHA’ BY SIDNEY JONES (& OTHERS); and Tim Wood-Woolley – CLAUDIO MUZIO, ‘THE VOICE OF THE CENTURY’   |
|                           | Saturday,<br>21 <sup>st</sup>  | <b>CLPGS<br/>Midlands</b>            | Roger Preston – I HAVEN’T A CLUE; and Bill Dean-Myatt – JAZZ IS WHERE YOU FIND IT.  |
|                           | Thursday,<br>26 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>Christie’s<br/>(London)</b>       | Mechanical Music Sale; 85 Old Brompton Road, London, SW7  |
| <b>AUGUST 2001</b>        | Tuesday,<br>21 <sup>st</sup> . | <b>CLPGS<br/>London</b>              | Tom Little – AN INSTITUTION REMEMBERED.   |
| <b>SEPTEMBER<br/>2001</b> | Saturday,<br>8 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>CLPGS<br/>West of<br/>England</b> | ‘PORTABLES PICNIC’ – Presenter, Keith Badman; at 9 Bouchers Hill, North Tawton, Devon.  |
|                           | Sunday,<br>9th                 |                                      | Wimbledon Record Fair   |
|                           | Saturday,<br>15 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>CLPGS<br/>Midlands</b>            | Eddie Dunn, & Peter Dempsey – THE SOUND OF SURPRISE.  |
|                           | Sunday,<br>16 <sup>th</sup>    | <b>CLPGS<br/>Northern</b>            | Glyn Hughes – WELSH ARTISTS; and John Hopkins – AUSTRALIAN ARTISTS.   |
|                           | Tuesday,<br>18 <sup>th</sup>   | <b>CLPGS<br/>London</b>              | Frank Andrews – WE HAVE OUR OWN RECORDS.  |
|                           | Sunday,<br>23 <sup>rd</sup> .  |                                      | NATIONAL VINTAGE COMMUNICATIONS FAIR; at the National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham.  |
|                           | Sunday,<br>23rd                |                                      | Record Fair; Fairfield Hall, Croydon  |
|                           | Saturday,<br>29 <sup>th</sup>  | <b>CLPGS<br/>Midlands</b>            | MIDLANDS GROUP PHONOFAIR; at St. Matthew’s Church Hall, East Park Way, Wolverhampton.   |

## VENUES and TIMES.

Unless stated otherwise, CLPGS Meetings take place at the following standard times and places –

- ◊ LONDON – Swedenborg Hall, Bloomsbury Way, London, WC, starting at 7.00 p.m.
- ◊ MIDLANDS – The Salvation Army Citadel, Little Shadwell Street, Birmingham. Starting times are 7.00 p.m. for 7.30 p.m.
- ◊ NORTHERN – Alston Hall, Alston Lane, Longridge, Preston, starting at 1.30 p.m.
- ◊ WEST OF ENGLAND – Meetings start at 2.30 p.m. for 3 o'clock. Venues alter (contact Paul Collenette on [REDACTED])

# Hillandale News

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The Society was founded in 1919

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**Membership Secretary:** Colin Loffler;  
[REDACTED], NEWPORT PAGNELL;  
MK16 8PH.  
Tel.: [REDACTED]  
E-mail: [REDACTED] (Membership  
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**CLPGS Bookshop:** George Woolford;  
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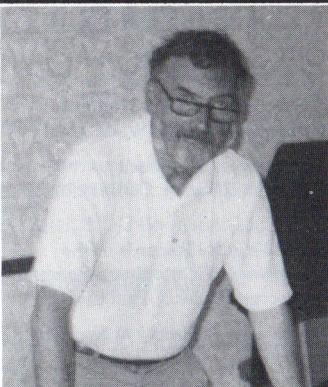
Editorial correspondence to Edward Parker,  
[REDACTED] WOLVERHAMPTON,;  
WV3 9BU. Tel.: [REDACTED]  
Editorial e-mail: [REDACTED]

## EDITORS' DESK

One of your editorial group has reason to feel somewhat chastened by the quality of our last issue, which was beset by some typographical and editorial gremlins. These particularly affected the articles by Frank Andrews and Charles A. Hooey. We can only apologise unreservedly to both the respective authors and to our readers for these errors, and record the correct versions in this issue. We shall, of course, redouble our efforts to improve the quality of proof-reading before the magazine goes to press, in an effort to ensure that these errors do not become commonplace.

Ray Phillips, Jr., one of our long-established Californian members, has sent a copy of an advertisement seen in a recent American issue of READERS' DIGEST, for digital hearing aids. The eye-catching part of the advert is of a dog and a horn gramophone. The horn gramophone is quite clearly one of the well-known FAKE versions, distinguished by a brass horn, and a dog-leg bend just above the bracket holding the tone-arm. The dog (which may be a Jack Russell or similar) sits in front of the horn, but is turning its head away – in disgust, perhaps?

2001 is the centenary of the first International Zonophone records in Europe. Paul Cleary and George Taylor have collaborated in producing a paper on the dating of the company's early recordings, which is printed in this issue.



With much regret, we have to record the passing of one of our stalwart members, Geoff Howl, a long time resident of Wednesbury, in the West Midlands. His obituary appears on page 345.

### Subscribe to CLPGS!

If you are not already a member, why not join the Society? For your annual subscription, which runs from 1<sup>st</sup> March each year, you will receive quarterly, the HILLANDALE NEWS, official journal of CLPGS. Articles are contributed by members for members, arranged by the Editorial team from material received. Meetings and Phonofairs are held at a variety of venues around the country.

Annual subscription, UK & Europe - £15; or £10 for registered students.

Rest of the World (outside Europe) - £17, or US \$28-50.

Contact the Membership Secretary, address on previous page.

Please note that material intended for inclusion in HILLANDALE NEWS must reach the Editorial Group not less than six weeks before the first day of the month of issue. Hence, the deadline for the Autumn 2001 issue will be the 19<sup>th</sup> August 2001. Copyright on all articles in HILLANDALE NEWS remains the property of the authors. Views expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Editorial Group.

## Chairman's Chat

At the beginning of the year, a Directors' meeting was held and a formal decision to change the name of this magazine was taken. Several titles were sent in by members following my request for suggestions last year. One immediately struck me as ideal, and the meeting concurred. Ian Williamson of Lancashire proposed the simple words –

### FOR THE RECORD.

Ian is a journalist, and applied himself to the problem that beset us all of finding a title that refers to our interest both in recordings and in the machines which play them. This simple title does just that whilst also punning on the fact that the magazine itself indeed puts our researches 'on record'. It has the additional advantage of being timeless.

For consistency's sake we will retain the old name until the new subscription year begins next March. Our editor is looking into a more sophisticated appearance for the magazine to accompany the change, but be assured that the A5 format will be retained.

The new régime which took over just under three years ago have made considerable savings in administration, led by Ed. Parker when he located a printer who quoted roughly two-thirds the sum asked by the previous firm. You should also know that thanks in great part to our Treasurer, Michael Smith, this is the first year in many when the Society

has not had to pay a fine for filing late accounts to the Revenue. Even last year we were struggling with incomplete and missing paperwork from earlier times, now mercifully a thing of the past. After a dip in bookshop takings (thanks to a stale catalogue) George Woolford has been busy with his now autonomous area and in the last year has produced a number of new publications under his own steam. The upshot of this is that we are now very sound financially, and a project is under way to make innovative use of some of our capital, which will emerge in future months.

I have one embarrassment. Last year, just when Colin Loffler had volunteered his services as Membership Secretary, I received a charming offer to take on the post by e-mail from a member who worked on the south coast in IT, as I remember it. I e-mailed back with thanks for his offer and promised to keep in contact. In a mass clearout of old files I then accidentally deleted the man's name and address. I searched the directory of member's names on or near the coast, but none 'rang a bell'. So please would that man get back in contact, because there is something I would really like to ask him! My address is — [REDACTED] to remind you. ■

**Howard Hope**

# Round the Horn – A Night to Remember

## by Tim Wood-Woolley

As collectors will know, a major selling point of the cylinder phonograph in the early years of the last century was the ability to make one's own records at home. Edison in particular, made great play that only the cylinder phonograph could 'afford hours of amusement making one's own records at home'. The number of home-recorded brown wax cylinders that still turn up bears witness to the fact that making records was a very popular pastime. Unfortunately, most of the entertainment contained on home-recorded records is of rather poor quality. As can be imagined, they were not intended for posterity and I have no doubt that if some of the performers were aware that their efforts were still being listened to some ninety years later, they would curl up with embarrassment. There are exceptions to this sweeping generalisation, in particular the recordings made by Mr. H. Grocock of Dover, with the lids inscribed in beautiful copperplate handwriting. These recordings bear comparison with the efforts of some commercial cylinder record producers.

With the efforts of the recording pioneers in mind, Colin Armfield brought along to the 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001 meeting in London, his Triumph with Cygnet horn for reproducing, and a Fireside, fitted with a recording stylus, a small vacuum pump for removing the swarf, and a recording horn for recording. We, his sometimes

not so willing audience, more than ably assisted by John Lally of stentorian voice, were to take part in re-creating those far-off days and record our efforts for posterity.



Figure 1. Colin Armfield, with his Triumph, with the Cygnet horn, and some cylinders.

As an introduction, Colin played through some of his collection of brown wax recordings that he had picked up over the years and had transferred to mini-disc. A bit of a mixed bag they were, people seemed to enjoy applauding themselves, making funny noises and whistling, although I suppose nothing much has really changed over the years. I well remember the tape recording machine

that used to be on the ground floor of the Science Museum in London. Invariably, people, mostly but not exclusively children, would shriek and blow raspberries, to have it played back at ear-splitting volume for the whole museum to hear.

Colin produced some of his previous home recordings, which he had made over the previous few years and we were able to marvel at the clarity and fidelity of the reproduction. After the interval, with refreshments kindly supplied by Colin's wife, Rita, the main event was to take place. John Lally was to lead in the singing and recording of three well-known music hall songs. The chorus was to be provided by the CLPGS (London Branch) Male Voice Choir, with Colin himself, not content to be the recording engineer, also providing the accompaniment on an electronic keyboard. The results, when played back, I think it would be fair to say, were quite astounding. John Lally's voice came through in all its glory with the chorus thankfully relegated to the background.

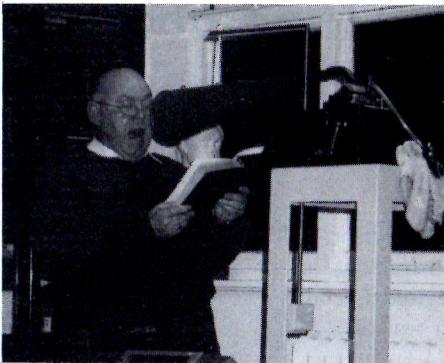


Figure 2. John Lally in full cry, at the recording horn.

I, for one, have never had the pleasure of taking part in the making of phonograph cylinders before, but was quite amazed at the quality of the results, which can be obtained by using ordinary standard Edison equipment.

It was all credit and heartfelt thanks to Colin, John and certainly not least, Rita, that an all-but-forgotten art was re-created for one too brief evening in a wet London in March. ■



Figure 3. Clustered around the recording horn, the 'CLPGS (London Branch) Male Voice Choir', with John Lally, and Colin Armfield accompanying.

# The Concert Machines, part 6: The Edison Bell Victor Concert

## by Mike Field

The Edison Bell was offered as a 'cheap instrument' to play both Concert-sized cylinders and the smaller 2-minute type. It was offered in the 1902/3 catalogue at £6 6s., which was cheap compared to the £25 asked for The Edison Concert or even the Edison-Bell Duplex at £15, also made by Edison. The front cover picture shows an overall view of the machine. The catalogue describes it as 'mounted in a handsome polished cabinet, nickel plated throughout and an attractive piece of mechanism and furniture'. Whether the plain (and cheap) cabinet could be described as handsome and attractive is a moot point but the mechanism certainly can perform well. The cabinet embodies a hinged drop-down front locked by a decorative triangular shaped key. The plain square lid is locked shut by two spring loaded catches at either side. It was sold with a 12-inch aluminium horn and a recorder.

The catalogue reader may be forgiven if he assumes that the machine was made by the finest British craftsmen and with Mr. Edison overseeing the design and construction. The catalogue, issued by Edisonia London, does not exactly say this but there is a strong inference - 'Edison-Bell Phonographs are the best in the world' (*sic*). However, in common with Edison-Bell policy at that time none of the range of phonographs was made in Britain. This one was almost certainly made in Europe -- possibly in Germany.

The top works follow the typical Continental construction of the time, particularly the method of lowering the reproducer on to the record. There are two mandrels, the standard size is permanently fixed while the 5-inch size is a slip on. The whole reproducer can be adjusted in height to allow either size of cylinder to be played (see Figure 1.) The motor is quite substantial and has some similarity with the Edison Home motor except that it has a double spring (Figure 2). The A-frame and side castings are painted green -- another feature of Continental construction sometimes seen. The motor embodies a 'silent wind' system which was considered to be a selling point, but the pawl does not remain silent for long due to wear. The fact that it cannot be wound when playing a record would appear to be a more important feature to have embodied in the design. The floating reproducer, shown in the pictures, is similar to Columbia or Pathé types and may not have been the exact one supplied with the machine although it will have been a similar gutta-percha type.

However, in spite of its cheapness, it plays well and the substantial construction shows little wear after nearly 100 years which is more than can be said for the later machines such as the Imp, Elf and Don sold by Edison-Bell, also made on the Continent. ■

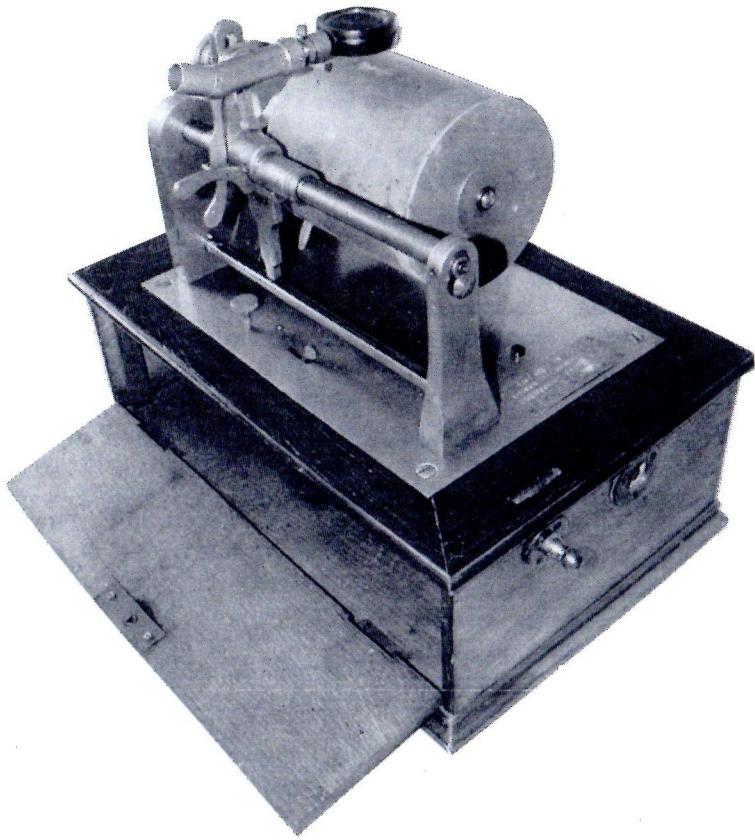


Figure 1. The top works of The Edison Bell Victor Concert machine.

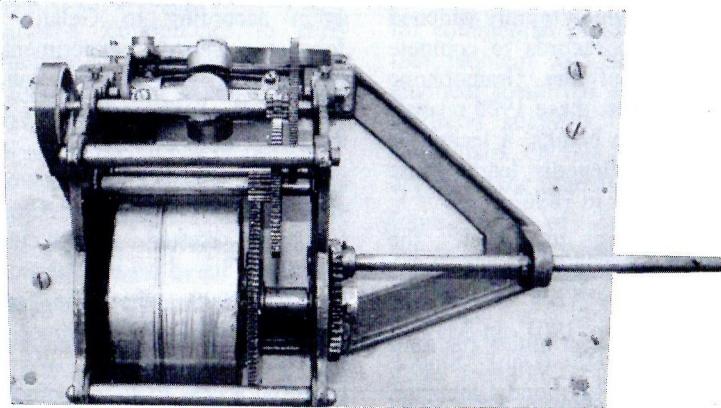


Figure 2. Under the baseplate of the Edison Bell Victor Concert machine.

# On Dating the Records of the International Zonophone Company

## By George Taylor & Paul Cleary

This paper is an attempt to date the ten-inch recordings issued by the International Zonophone Company of Berlin and to correct some previous misconceptions.

At the beginning of the last century, there were two major producers of classical vocal records in Europe – the Gramophone Company, in 1901 becoming the Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (G & T), and the International Zonophone Company of Berlin. Sources such as Bauer<sup>1</sup> list many records made by the latter organisation dated between 1900 and 1903, and these include ten-inch records with paper labels, a format not introduced by G & T until November 1901<sup>2</sup>. Again, Read & Welch<sup>3</sup> describe how the Zonophone parent in America sent Joseph W. Jones to Europe in January 1900 to make records of coster songs and music hall novelties, a range which rapidly widened to include operatic records to compete with the efforts of the Gramophone Company. Moreover, these 1900 records were made on wax blanks, a technique which Jones had allegedly learnt while working for Berliner in 1896<sup>4</sup>.

However, according to Gelatt<sup>5</sup> the International Zonophone Company was incorporated in New York exactly one hundred years ago in 1901. In May of that year, John D. (Dan) Smoot, recording engineer, Raymond Gloetzner, matrix former, and Edward Pancoast,

machinist, sailed from America for Germany. Each had been employed by Berliner and Eldridge Johnson, and was ‘thus initiated in the “secrets” of the wax recording process’. The G & T’s own senior recording engineer, Fred Gaisberg, described in his diary, meeting his fellow Americans Smoot and International Zonophone Company manager, Frederick Prescott, in Berlin on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1901<sup>6</sup>. Records were to be manufactured in a factory set up in Berlin, which was in operation by August 1901<sup>7</sup>. And not just the 7-inch records usual at this time: International Zonophone was to be the first to present the new 10-inch record in Europe, in September 1901 in Germany, using black and gold paper labels, which G & T later claimed to be an absolute copy of their November designs.

As for Joseph Jones experimenting with wax recording with Berliner in 1896, again according to Gelatt<sup>8</sup>, Eldridge Johnson began experiments with recording on wax in 1897; but Berliner shied clear of wax, in fear of infringing the Bell-Tainter patents.

Clearly, inconsistencies have already arisen. The Gramophone Company in England started producing wax recordings based on the Johnson process in May 1900, when the Bell-Tainter patents lapsed in Europe<sup>9</sup>. So, in principle, Zonophone would have potential access to such a process at this time. But according to Bauer, the 1900

Zonophones had black paper labels. Paper labelling had been introduced by Johnson on his records in about August 1901<sup>10</sup>, but would Zonophone technicians have had access to this technology also?

Matters were thus when we listened to three '1900' 10-inch Zonophones by the soprano Fanny Toresella (1856-1914) on Symposium CD 1065 (*The Harold Wayne Collection, Volume 1*). The catalogue numbers of these were X481, X483, and X485, and the records were made in Milan. But Bauer's dating of 1900 must be wrong, since the company making the records was not incorporated until 1901.

This raised the question of how Bauer and other early authorities arrived at the dating of these Zonophones. Admittedly, Zonophone records had been made in America since the Spring of 1900<sup>7</sup>, and perhaps Joseph Jones' European recordings had indeed been made in 1900 and sent back to America for processing. Perhaps Bauer and others lumped all Zonophone records, American and European, together when considering possible dates of recording. Drummond<sup>11</sup> dated Caruso's Zonophones to early 1902, whereas it now seems highly probable that they were recorded on 19<sup>th</sup> April 1903 or soon after<sup>12</sup>. This is the date given on the recent Naxos re-issue<sup>13</sup>, and even the EMI LP of 1973 gives Spring 1903. Accepting the early date for the Caruso records, might the dates of other Zonophones have been guessed at by comparing catalogue numbers?

The International Zonophone issued both 10-inch and 7-inch records. The former were numbered in a single series prefixed by 'X', the latter with a number only.

Our aim was to refine the dating of the 'X'-series records from the start of operations to early summer 1903, when G & T became a majority shareholder in the International Zonophone Company. Prime sources of information were a detailed history of International Zonophone by Andrews<sup>14</sup>, which is essentially in agreement with Gelatt's statements, and an incomplete discography of the 'X'-series Zonophones published by Zwarg on the Internet<sup>15</sup>.

There were only three firm dates: May 1901 when the Zonophone technicians sailed for Europe; 29<sup>th</sup> August 1901 for the recording of 'X70', which was scratched in the American fashion – '8.29.01' – into the wax<sup>16</sup>; and 19<sup>th</sup> April 1903 or thereabouts for the Caruso records, X1550-X1556.

Records were identified by a catalogue number issued by the Berlin plant. It seems meaningless to say that matrix and catalogue numbers were identical; the plant would need only one number. Andrews believes it probable that the number was issued only when a processed matrix was deemed suitable for commercial pressing. There remains the problem of how the recording engineer identified a recorded wax; as Andrews suggests, perhaps there was some mark on this wax which did not appear on the final disc.

Examination of Zwarg's discography shows that recordings were made at various locations, and that a long sequence of consecutive catalogue numbers might apply to records from a given location. This might suggest that some block system was in use. However, such long sequences are often interrupted

by a few numbers from another location, and it does appear that the 'blocks' did not, in general, occupy regular positions in the overall numerical sequence, such as a block of one hundred numbers, say, as one might expect for a proper block system. Zonophone's recording engineers travelled around from place to place, dispatching cases of waxes to Berlin where the processed matrices got their catalogue numbers. In general, the allocation of catalogue numbers appears to reflect the way batches of waxes arrived in Berlin: the higher the catalogue number, the later the recording.

Nevertheless, there does seem to be at least one exception to this general progression. The April 1903 Caruso recordings, X1550-X1556, are part of a block of numbers used in Milan at that time for a special series of blue-label recordings arranged by the Anglo-Italian Commerce Company (AICC), featuring artists of international reputation. The series apparently runs from X1507 to X1598. Andrews describes a catalogue of black-label records dated June 1903 in which the highest number is a Paris recording, X2188. As he points out, it is possible that the catalogue was printed some time before the nominal issue date, and accepting that it was company policy that not more than four weeks elapsed between making a recording and issuing commercial discs, it would appear that 'X2188' was recorded some time in the Spring of 1903 – about the time that the Milan X1500 series was being used. It is curious (and perhaps disturbing?) that the anomalous timing of the use of this X1500 series is largely based on the establishment of the Caruso recording date, with little room for error.

Again, in the sequence of numbers, there is a considerable gap in the list of identified records between 'X1300' or thereabouts and 'X1493'. A few numbers are accounted for, and Andrews speculates that others might be associated with hitherto unidentified Russian recordings. We assume that the use of this range of numbers fell into the 'normal' timescale. It must be pointed out that there is a large gap in the European sequence of 'X' numbers, X500 to X1000 or thereabouts, which was used in numbering, or re-numbering, American (including South American) recordings.

So, to summarise the dating records of the 'X' series, we have 'X70' on 29<sup>th</sup> August 1901, a gap in the sequence between X500 and X1000, Caruso's X1550-X1556 of approximately 19<sup>th</sup> April 1903, and 'X2188', perhaps recorded in April 1903 (Zwarg dates this as 1902). There is a further gap in the sequence between X1500 and X1600 or thereabouts due to the later use of this 'block' by the AICC blue labels. It should also be pointed out that, though the evidence suggests that the 'X' numbers were issued in Berlin in a chronological sequence as the waxes were received, this might not necessarily reflect the chronology of recording itself. For example, several engineers might have been recording simultaneously in different locations, and various factors might have speeded up or delayed the dispatch of batches of waxes to the plant. Our dating attempts are confined to the period between the start of operations in 1901 and the June 1903 catalogue. Though the G & T became a majority shareholder in the International

Zonophone Company in June 1903, the 'X' series extends well beyond the 'X2188' of this catalogue. Zwarg's discography goes as far as X2565. Perhaps, as Andrews suggests, this represents fulfilment of contracts undertaken before G & T assumed control. The records we attempt to date therefore, go from X1 to X500, X1000 to X1499, and X1600 to X2188; that is to say, about sixteen hundred discs. The American technicians sailed to Germany in May 1901. They had to set up a pressing plant, described by Andrews, and undertake recording. Let us assume that recording started in early July 1901. From then to the end of April 1903, the assumed recording date for X2188, is twenty-two months; but during the last months, X1507 to X1598 were simultaneously being recorded in Milan for the AICC.

After nearly two months of recording, the engineers had reached X70, but probably the rate of recording increased as markets became established and more engineers were trained. Sixteen hundred records in twenty-two months is an average of around seventy-three per month. If we assume a slower rate from X1 to X500 of, say, fifty per month, this places X500, and X1000, the continuation of the series after the American gap, at the end of April 1902, and leaves twelve months for the remaining eleven hundred records, or about ninety-one per month. Such a rate of progress takes us to X1500 at mid-October 1902, with a jump to X1600 to account for the later-recorded AICC block, and continues to X2188 at the end of April 1903. At this time, the AICC block was being simultaneously recorded.

If this dating was expressed as a graph of catalogue numbers against time, the approximate dating of a given record, perhaps very approximate indeed, could be established. Until and unless more is discovered about the actual operations of the recording engineers, and in particular more firm recording dates can be found, possibly faintly scratched into the wax of International Zonophone records in private and institutional collections, this dating scheme must remain a tentative one. Using the scheme, Bauer's '1900' Toresellas, X443, X445 and X447, now date at March 1902, tallying roughly with the date of '1901/1902' given for her 'X483' in EMI's *Record of Singers, Volume 1*<sup>17</sup>. If '1901/1902' means a date of late 1901 or early 1902 rather than any time in these years, it would fit fairly well into our tentative dating scheme. Regardless of the details of our revised scheme, it is clear that the dating of the first ten-inch International Zonophone records to 1900, begun by Bauer for want of other evidence and uncritically accepted by collectors for decades since, is incorrect and in the light of readily available published sources can no longer be justified. ■

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3. O. Read and W. L. Welch, *From tinfoil to stereo*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1976, p.142.
4. *Ibid*, p. 132.
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6. *The Fred Gaisberg diaries, pt. 6*, TALKING MACHINE REVIEW no. 62, 1980, p. 1685.
7. F. Andrews, *The Zonophone Record and its associated labels in Britain*, pt. I,

HILLANDALE NEWS no. 166, 1989, p. 150-156.

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15. C. Zwarg, *Discography of International Zono-phone 10" discs*, Internet <[www.truesoundtransfers.de/zon.10.htm](http://www.truesoundtransfers.de/zon.10.htm)>
16. C. Zwarg, e-mail to P. Cleary, 19<sup>th</sup> December 2000.
17. *The Record of Singers*, pt. 2 : 1901-1916, EMI LPs RLS7706, 1982.

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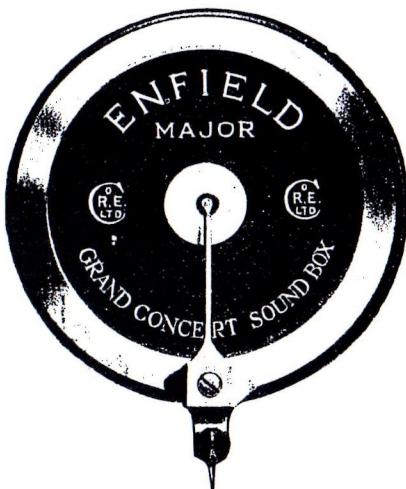
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# Discoveries in Kenya & Syria

## by Ray Phillips

It is amusing to read in recent issues about Crapophones. I've had some amusing experiences with them. I was in Nairobi not long after the tragic bombing of the American Embassy there, and visited several antique shops. Four of them had 'you-know-whats'. I was not

surprised to find Indians running almost all the shops there. One shop had a regular-sized machine, but on the shelf next to it was a machine of barely one-quarter size! I joked that the Crapophone had had a pup – illegitimate, of course!



Figure 1. A Crapophone with its 'pup'.

In Damascus last Spring, two of the shops in the *souk* – the bazaar – in old Damascus had – well, you know. However, one shop that our guide had found for me had a group of brown wax cylinders in the rather typical European-

style blue boxes, but with Arabic writing on some of the lids. Several had 'DAMAS' (French for Damascus) as part of the printed dealer's label, the titles being written in Arabic. One label was from 'STAMBOUL' (Istanbul).



Figure 2. A Damascene dealer's label on a cylinder box top.

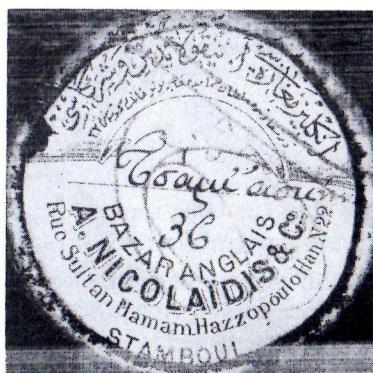


Figure 3. The dealer from Istanbul, as printed on a cylinder box top.

He had a wooden box with perhaps 25 cylinders in it.

I asked the price.

'One hundred fifty American dollar.'

'All?'

'No, each!'

I protested and tried to bargain, with no luck whatsoever. His only answer was 'Why do you think my shop is called 'Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves?' Well, I realised that I would never go back to Damascus, picked out the best, and paid his price.



Figure 4. 'Ali Baba' and his \$150 cylinders. Later, when my guide accused him of damaging tourist trade with unreasonably high prices he denied having sold me anything! He had apparently forgotten my picture-taking!

I did find one other shop with a few at \$20, so 'averaged down' a bit.

Some of the cylinders appeared to have announcements in Arabic. One evening we were entertained by a group of men singing with the accompaniment of a large zither-like instrument played on a

man's lap. The cylinders were the same – all of them! A professor friend of Mike Khanchalian (whom some of you may know) has translated some of the titles on the lids, and is working on the announcements. ■

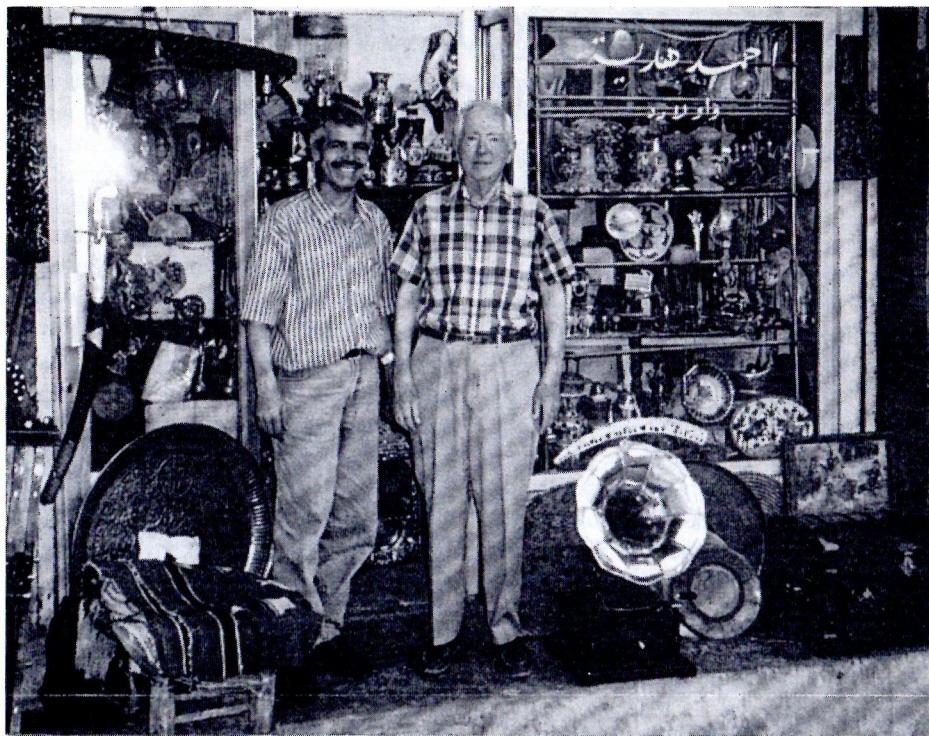


Figure 5. This shop had a Crapophone on display out in front. He also had an AT Graphophone in terrible shape – he offered an HMV Exhibition reproducer for it [/] – for \$2000. He did sell me some brown wax cylinders at \$20 each. [Our correspondent is pictured with the proprietor - Ed.]

\*\*\*\*\*



*'Maybe the Pharaohs knew a thing or two about acoustic recording techniques?'*

# We Also Have Our Own Records, part 16 (continued)

## 'Festival Record'

### by Frank Andrews

[Editors' Note - An error on the part of one of your editors resulted in the portion of Frank Andrews' text dealing with the FESTIVAL RECORD label being omitted from our previous issue, although the label itself was illustrated. As Frank points out, it is important that the FESTIVAL RECORD information is published before that of labels beginning with the letter 'G', as when we deal with GLOBOPHON RECORDS, from which FESTIVAL RECORDS derive, the text refers readers back to the previously published FESTIVAL RECORDS information. We apologise to Frank and our readers for the omission, and the confusion caused by this.]

**FESTIVAL RECORD.** This was a 10", double-side recorded disc with blue and gold labels. They were never advertised in the trade periodicals and the label was not registered as a trade mark.

The British proprietor or concessionaire for the records is unknown.

Because the design of the label, with its name within an oval cartouche, was identical to the design of the GLOBOPHON RECORD label, it is visually evident that FESTIVAL RECORDS were a product of the Globophon Schallplatten GmbH of Germany. The English issues of the FESTIVALS were in a 7000 catalogue number series, and their matrices shared in a 6000 series with not only the GLOBOPHON RECORDS, but also with stencilled discs, such as the 10" scarlet and gold ECLIPSE RECORDS and

one of the series of APOLLO GRAMOPHONE RECORDS owned by Craies & Stavridi of Bunhill Row, London, EC.



Figure 1. The FESTIVAL RECORD label.

It is my supposition that a 'KV' suffix found associated with many of the matrix numbers may be the initials of Paul Kuchler and Albert Vogt, so that the essence of what follows is mostly an hypothesis on my part.

Albert Vogt had been associated with the Nigrolitwerke in Germany, a supplier of materials used in the making of gramophone records until, in 1910, along with a fellow employee, Herr Kybarth, they left Nigrolit and travelled to Russia, to Aprelewka, a suburb of Moscow. There, with the involvement of a German merchant, Herr Gottlieb Moll, a records manufacturing plant was established to make the Russian METROPOL RECORDS. At some stage during 1911, Vogt fell out with Kybarth and he returned to

Germany. In Berlin, Vogt came to an arrangement with a Herr Paul Kuchler, with the pair setting themselves up as the Firma Sirena Sprechmaschinen Vertrieb. This was to act as the German agency for the Sirena machines and records coming from Warsaw, then in Russian-controlled Poland. Kuchler and Vogt also established a German record company in Berlin, called Berolina Schallplatten GmbH.

One year later, on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1912, Kuchler was appointed the Berlin Agent for the Schallplatten Presserei GmbH, pressers of gramophone records within the industry. On December 10<sup>th</sup>, 1912, Vogt was appointed Presserei's Agent for the Weissensee district only, of Berlin. The two had been instrumental in founding the business in the first instance, and in March 1913 were then reported as the firm's directors.

Globophon Schallplatten GmbH had been founded in 1907. Thus, to link that company's GLOBOPHON and FESTIVAL records to Kuchler & Vogt, because of the 'KV' suffixes is realistically only possible after Schallplatten Presserei had been formed in 1912.

As a matter of fact, at the Autumn Trade Fair in Leipzig, Globophon Schallplatten announced that it had an English repertoire of over 400 titles, which had been recorded in London. A further connection may be that, as the suffix 'M' has also been noted with the '6000' matrix series, Kuchler & Vogt's Berolina Schallplatten business is known to have applied for the METROPOL RECORD label to become its registered trade mark in Germany.

It is highly probable that I am entirely in error in attempting to link Kuchler and Vogt to the 'KV' and 'M' suffixes.

*... series continued*

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GRAND PRIZES.  
Paris, 1900.  
St. Louis,  
1904.  
Milan, 1906.

# We Also Have Our Own Records, part 17

## 'Gaelfonn' to 'Globophon & Globos Records' by Frank Andrews

**GAELFONN** – meaning ‘Scottish voices’ – had the legend ‘For Scots, By Scots, Of Scots’ below the record’s name, or had it similarly printed in Gaelic. Of 10" diameter, the records had pale blue and black labels bearing the silhouette of a small, standing bird. Two concentric rings around the spindle hole held, within the space provided, a design of four small chains which separated the letters of the word ‘Alba’, the historic Greek and a Gaelic name for Scotland.

The discs, ‘British Made’, were the product of a business, having the same name as the records, with its address at 102 Maxwell Street, Glasgow, C.1., which was all printed on the labels.

This make of records made its appearance well after World War II, probably in 1956.

I am indebted to fellow-member, Bill Dean-Myatt, for the following information about the founder of the label. It was founded by Murdo Ferguson, a Gaelic speaker from the Isle of Lewis. He studied at technical college whilst doing his apprenticeship with North British Diesel Company, before joining AEI as an engineer. He claims that Gaelfonn is the only one of the three Scottish companies (Gaelfonn, Scottish Records and Waverley) that is actually pressed in Scotland (!!). He always knew that his first records would be Gaelic and

he took a trip round the North to see what interest there was. One of his first records had 500 pre-pressing orders. (He does not say which.) ‘Fully 60% of the records produced so far are in Gaelic’. They put out an LP entitled ‘Scottish Gaelic for Beginners’. He says that an LP of Rangers Supporters’ songs sold 40,000 copies and led to a series of similar LPs for other clubs. They also made EPs.

I know very little about these 78 rpm discs, and between myself and member Bill Dean-Myatt, we have noted only eleven. Five of these have the catalogue numbers 1001 and 1005-1008, with four having ‘GMA’ prefixes and with 1005 having a ‘GLA’ prefix. Why the prefixes differ needs an explanation.

From a study of these five examples and noting that the matrix numbers, or the matrix stock control numbers, have differences, it would appear that the Gaelfonn business probably relied on a few companies to take its recordings and on some others to press the discs. For example, GMA-1001 has matrices prefixed BC-CAR 6065 & 6066, and neither Bill nor I can suggest from these who the recorders may have been although the pressers may have been Oriole Records.

With GLA-1005 and GMA-1006 & 1007, it is quite obvious from the O-6700

& O-6800 matrix stock series that we are now faced with some Oriole Records factory pressings from Clinton Stanley, near Aylesbury, in Buckinghamshire, as these numbers follow those in the prefixed X-6300 series which had been used as the stock matrix numbers on the Embassy records, as sold by F. W. Woolworth's & Co. Ltd. during 1956 and 1957.

Another disc, GMA-1102, has matrix stock control numbers O-6805 and O-6806 with other numbers printed on its labels. One shows GC-D-577 and the other GC-D-578, and we have lately concluded that the first two digits, '57', give away the year of issue and then a numerical sequence. Thus, irrespective of the varied letter prefixes on other Gaelfonns, they thereby reveal, through our known numbers, a numerical sequence having nos. '1' and '2', '5' to '10', '13' and '16', '19' and '20', and '23' and '24'.

If we are correct in this, do we come to a 1958 issue with GMA-1008, having matrices GO-D-581 & 582, signifying numbers 1 and 2 for 1958?

Where the matrix numbers are prefixed 'GC-D-', we know from GMA-1602 that the recordings were undertaken by the G. C. Electrical Recording Co., Ltd. of Wardour Street, London, W.1, thus implying that the letter prefixes may indicate the identity of the original recorders.

With GLA-1005 showing 'GB-B.571 & B.572, and GMA1201 showing GB-B.575 & 576 as matrices, we thereby conclude that the prefix 'GB' here indicates recordings by the Gui de Buire, Ltd. business of 83 New Bond Street, London, W.1. By the way, most of the

discs, even though sung in Gaelic, do state 'Recorded in London'.

The progression of the catalogue numbers, too, are strangely ordered. Consider that, after catalogue number GMA-1008, comes GMA.1102, then GMA.1201, then GMA.1301 and GMA.1602, yet all with their matrix numbers, under our presumed 1957 block, being quite close. Some explanation is required.

Two further numbers are GTA-5001, which has GC-E-5719 & 5720 as matrix numbers. Here, the intrusive 'E' may have been used because the titling is in English and not in Gaelic. So, ignoring the 'E' here may well be two more recordings from the G. C. Electrical Recording Co.

Quite differently numbered was SPA-2201, with matrices S-5830 & S-5821 and with an additional 1233 on the labels. This disc was entirely entitled in English and the S-prefixed matrix stock numbers are from the Oriole Works, so again, we think that the numbers may be taken as indicating 1958 as the year of issue.

I know that Gui de Buire often used Philips to press their recordings for their contracted clients. Perhaps members can help further with this label, especially as to when the records first appeared, when they demised, and who else may have carried out the recordings and the pressing?

**THE GAIETY RECORD.** I know of only two examples of this label. That, with cat. no. 154, has upon one side a recording of E. Newton's and A. E. Tate's song *Somewhere A Voice Is Calling*, with *Roses in June* on reverse.

These had been recorded by the Welsh tenor, John Roberts, an *Eisteddfod* prize winner, who had recorded many times for Jumbo Records between 1911 and 1915. The matrix numbers on this disc do show Jumbo Records' 'Lxo' matrix prefixes.

I do not know where Gaiety Records were sold nor have I ever seen them mentioned in the trade press.

My source is a hand-drawn representation of the label sent to me by an American correspondent. It depicts a Pierrot and Pierrette with, between them, a shield which bears a figure holding a curved sword. The colours were red and black.



Figure 1. The hand-drawn copy of the GAIETY RECORD label.

The pressing of the first title was almost certainly from a master used on Jumbo Record no. 1005, issued in May 1913, but the matrix of which appeared again on Jumbo Record no. A.58, issued in August 1914.

The other Gaiety Record was mentioned in THE HISTORIC RECORD, no. 80, and was also pressed from Jumbo Records. One may surmise that other Jumbo Records appeared as Gaiety Records. I welcome full details of any other 10ins.

diameter Gaiety Records, and also a photo of the label.

**GALA RECORDS, LTD.** This company was founded on £100 capital in September 1928. That same month, the word 'GALA' was applied for by William Henry Houghton (Manufacturer) of Bury Lane, Horsell, Woking, Surrey, to be registered as a trade mark, with the device of a dancing couple associated. This was to be applied to records and gramophones. There was an eight month delay before registration, and when registered, it immediately passed to Piccadilly Records, Ltd – manufacturers, which, like Gala Records, Ltd., had also been founded with £100 capital. Piccadilly Records were at Metropole House, Finsbury Square, London, EC.

I have never seen a Gala Record. Did Mr. Houghton have any made before Piccadilly Records acquired his trade mark?

(Any Gala records which may have come from Piccadilly Records, Ltd., and the later Gala Records of Selco Products, Ltd. and their Gala (Goldentone) discs, all belonged to primary producing companies which sold their own products, and, as such, do not come within my remit.)

(For the various labelled discs sold by **A. W. GAMAGE, LTD.**, see the series *Records in Store*, previously published in HILLANDALE NEWS.)

*I am indebted to Bill Dean-Myatt for the following upon which I have nothing to add:*

In a December 1923 edition of the Scottish daily newspaper, THE GLASGOW HERALD, there was a reference to –

**'THE GARRETT RECORD** which gave 'Quality With Value' – from Frame Flint Pianos, of 168 Bath Street, Glasgow." Who knows anything more?

**GAYTONE.** A 10in. disc GT.21 is mentioned by fellow member, Eddie Shaw, in his DATE ABOUT ALL THOSE ENGLISH SEVENTY-EIGHTS, in the Private Publishers section, but as I have not come across this label otherwise, I again cannot make any comment.

**GERALD LAWRENCE PRODUCTIONS, LTD.** were at 25 Duke Street, London, W1, when what I believe was their first advertisement, appeared in the GRAMOPHONE periodical of March 1949. This offered 25 discs under the heading of *Shakespeare Lives*. The recordings comprised excerpts from the bard's plays, which had been performed by 'Famous Actors and Actresses', but they remained anonymous!

The labels carried the initials 'GLP', accompanied by the words 'The Play's the Thing'.

Also to be had on three discs were excerpts from the cinema film of the play, *The School for Scandal*.

Including the purchase tax, the discs cost 8s 6d. (42½p) each. The records were produced by EMI Ltd.

Earlier, in 1944 and 1945, Gerald Lawrence had been living at 37 Belsize Avenue, Hampstead, London, but then had moved nearby to 211 Lyndhurst Road, from where he was selling gramophone records during 1946 to 1948. But he was no longer there in 1949, when he had his business in Duke Street, W1.

*Can any member augment my information about this label?*

**GIBB or JOHN HENRY GIBB.** There is only a remote possibility that any records were produced for John Henry Gibb, who, in May 1906, became registered with a trade mark, without any wording, which depicted the representation of a nightingale perched on the branch of a tree. The mark was to be cover for his talking machines and records business which he carried on at 19 Renfrew Street, Glasgow, Scotland. His mark ran for the full course of 14 years, but it was not renewed.

What is interesting about this mark, whether it appeared on records or not, is that before its expiry in April 1920, a similar mark had been applied for, in the second week of June 1919, by A. Waite & Co., Ltd. – factors, of 15 & 17 Figtree Lane, Sheffield, Yorkshire, but that mark had the word 'Songster' associated. The registration of that application did not ensue until eighteen months later, in contrast to the usual time lapse of three months, so this reveals there was some considerable hindrance to the mark being granted to A. Waite & Co.

Finally granted in the third week of February 1921, two years and three weeks later, the mark passed to J. Stead & Co., the producer of Songster Needles, at Manor Works, Cricket Inn Road, Sheffield. That was in March 1923. Three more similar marks were registered to J. Stead & Co. during 1928 and 1929.

**The 'GIRMAC' RECORDING STUDIO** of 111 Union Street, Glasgow, C1, appear to have had their 'own' records by

offering an electrical transcription service, whether from extant records or from broadcasts I know not. I have one example with a black and white label, which is a coated aluminium type of 10" disc, upon which labels are pencilled, the titles *Tiger Rag* on one face, and *Dinah* on the reverse. No artists are credited, but one is urged to use only 'trailing needles'.

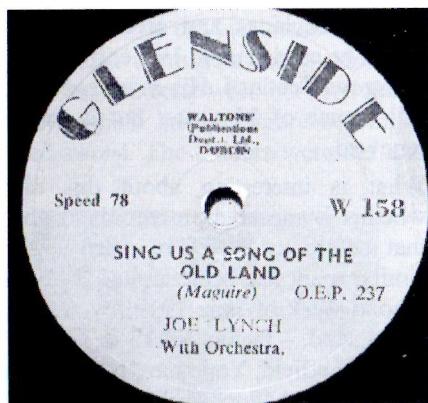


Figure 2. The GLEN SIDE record label, as used by Walton's, of Dublin.

GLEN SIDE were Republic of Ireland (Éire) records, initially made in the 1950s for Walton's (Publication Dept.), Dublin. Walton's was a sheet music publisher from about 1912. In 1920 they operated a music shop and became a record publisher, with commercial programmes on radio from about 1952. The recordings used helped to promote the sale of their sheet music. Glenside was the first label. All the recordings were taken in Éire and all were of Irish artists. All the discs were pressed by The Gramophone Co. (Ireland) Ltd. of Dublin, which had its pressing plant in Waterford, and none was pressed by any other firm. Matrix numbers had 'OEP'

prefixes. They were 10" discs with yellow labels, printed black and were first issued in 1952, numbered from W.101 onwards. The 78 rpm records were succeeded by 12" diameter, 45 rpms and long-playing discs.

Import duties and tariffs on gramophone records had been introduced by the Éire Government in order to promote the growth of an Irish-based industry. In 1960, with 78 rpm records already faded out in favour of the 33 and 45 rpm longer playing discs, The Gramophone Company (Ireland) Ltd. obtained a licence to sell Glenside records as its own label in all parts of the world, except for Éire itself and the United States. Thus did the Irish supplements, from The Gramophone Company, begin to include the Glenside label amongst the other labels it controlled. The supplements also showed the Glenside label, then with its logo of an Irish harp.

With a large Irish population in parts of Liverpool, London, etc., Glenside were readily available in England.

I am indebted to Peter Corolan of The Irish Traditional Music Archive for some of the information herein about Glenside and Walton's.

The GLOBE RECORD, in a 10" size, bore green labels printed in gold, with a logo depicting a hemisphere of our world showing the whole of the American continents.

This depiction was used in spite of the fact that, although recorded in London and pressed in Prussia, they are believed to have been exported mostly to Australasia.



Figure 3. The GLOBE RECORD label.

If a business with Globe Records was carried on in Australasia, it may have been as a tally-man business similar to such businesses carried on in Britain circa 1910–1913, e.g., John Bull Records being the most notorious. My own example of a Globe Record had been pressed from two different Bel Canto Records with catalogue nos. 5023A and 5192B. Those two sides I have listed also as Dacapo Record no. 35 (?), and it is known that Bel Canto and Dacapo Records masters were employed, among others, to press John Bull Records for the English Record Company, Ltd. It would be of interest to have a number of known Globe Record matrices to compare and discover if they always match with those known on John Bull Records, as do those of the eight sides known to me, showing four different matrix sources.

The Globe Record label was never registered as a trade mark in England, so the proprietor remains unknown. Don Taylor's THE ENGLISH 78 PICTURE BOOK has it that the Globe Records were pressed, under contract, by The Homophone Company, GmbH, of Berlin, but on what evidence is not stated. This seems unlikely especially as it is noted that the numbering of Globe Records was

as complex as is found with the John Bull Records. Certainly, none of the latter were pressed from Homophon masters, and I doubt that any Globe Records were pressed by that company in Berlin?

The label illustrated in Taylor's book does clearly show a number common to Bel Canto Records.

**GLOBOPHON RECORDS and GLOBOS RECORDS.** Although these two labels were the product of a primary firm in Germany, the Schallplattenfabrik Globophon GmbH, the company never sold its discs in Britain directly, but did so through an agent so that, in effect, they became Frank Rauth's labels in the UK. When he first advertised the **GLOBOS RECORDS** in November 1906, a team was already in London recording up-to-date selections of British titles which were expected to win much favour with British record buyers. Various German recorded samples were heard in London which, it was reported, very much pleased those who listened to them.

The publicity accompanying the introduction of the records to the UK market proclaimed that '*Globos Records Guarantee Good Music – Loud and Clear – Indestructible – Cheap*'. With respect to 'Indestructible', I believe that the expression was used to contrast the rigidity of the discs against the wax cylinder records which were then enjoying their heyday, but which were much more fragile. The really unbreakable and earlier recorded Nicole Records were still to be had, as were the Neophone Disc Phonograph Records.

The Globos discs were sold only in the

10" diameter size, and could be had single-face recorded at 2s. (10p) each, or as twin-face recorded at 3s. (15p) each. Frank Rauth was ready to appoint factors for his records, with applications to be sent to 9 Christopher Street, Finsbury Square, London, EC.

It is interesting to note that the label displayed in his advertisement carried the same geometrical motif which was to appear on Pelican Records some six years later.



Figure 3. Advertisement by Frank Rauth for GLOBOS RECORDS in THE PHONO TRADER AND RECORDER.

Globos Records had appeared in Germany earlier, in February, and claimed to have new and original recordings. The name had been forwarded for registration, as trade mark, in December 1905 from the Hannover works to cover for machines and disc and cylinder records. It became registered in June 1906.



Figure 4. The GLOBOS RECORD label, featuring a Dutch performance.

Nothing more was mentioned about Globos Records in the UK's trade press after the initial advertisement, but the discs continued in Germany. They were still being exhibited at the Leipzig Spring Fair in March 1908, where they were said to have been made with a fine, ringing tone for use with the Globos-Starkton machines, the loud-sounding gramophones on display, a product from the Max Bruckner, Freyer-Werke in Leipzig-Mochum. The Globos Records, in association with the Globophon Records were mentioned for the last time in the December 1908 issue of PHONOGRAPHISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT.

In early February 1909, the German company's disc was then described as the Globos-Globophone Record, but, by the end of the month, it was simply called the Globophon Record of 25½cm diameter size, selling at 2-25 marks.

**GLOBOPHON** had been submitted for registration as a trade mark in Germany, in July 1905, by Herr Franz Erdelt of Hannover, but he had to wait ten months before the mark was registered to him in May 1906. Whether he was applying on behalf of Schallplattenfabrik Globophon or whether he sold the mark to the

company later I have no knowledge.

Not only were the Globos Records not mentioned again after the initial UK advertisement but the Globophon Records, which were to have an English recorded repertoire, were not announced until September 1912, some 3½ years after their appearance in PHONOGRAPHISCHE ZEITSCHRIFT. In the meantime, Globophon Records were produced in Germany for the domestic market and for other countries for which polyglot labelling was often employed.

Two items of interest occurred in the interim. Firstly, in November 1910, THE TALKING MACHINE NEWS revealed that Globophon had issued a recording to mark the centenary, in June, of the death of Queen Louise, of Prussia, making use of the pedal harp with which the former Queen accompanied herself when singing. On the recording, it was played by Herr A. Swart, the Court harpist, as an accompaniment to the operatic artist, Frieda Singler, singing Körner's poem, *To Queen Louise*, set to music. The company's recording expert, allegedly, had employed a new method of recording which was said to have successfully captured the full tones of the harp. The second item of interest was the claim, made in May 1911, that Schallplattenfabrik Globophon had been the first business in Germany to introduce automatic brakes to its gramophones.

Beka Records of London included Globophon Records, among other listed labels, in its exchange scheme with dealers' unwanted stocks prior to the announcement of the arrival of the Globophon Records in September 1912, thereby indicating that some Globophons

had been on sale already.



Figure 5. The GLOBOPHON RECORD label, featuring a title from the English repertoire.

Differing announcements, in September 1912, told in one instance, of a 300 titles list being ready, but that there were 400 titles with English repertoire in another. The discs were to sell at 1s 6d. (7½p) each, thus matching the price of the newly introduced Coliseum Records and Scala Records, of three months earlier, which had introduced the first cheap, solid stock disc records and a price battle onto the British market.

As the Globophon masters were used to press Festival Records, I refer members and readers back to that label for my remarks regarding the Globophon company itself. I would also like to bring to your attention David Moore's monograph on his Globophon masters numerical listing, which he has compiled with the help of members Mike Langridge, Roger Thorne and myself. To date, he has discovered only 34 titles on the Globophon Record label itself from the advertised 300(?) or 400 (?) announced in 1912.

The English repertoire titles were separately numbered from other

repertoires by the matrix stock control numbers on each side. These began at 6001. Only in one instance has a Globophon been found with a number common to both sides – no. 6074, which shows master 6114 for one side and none on reverse, yet there was another disc coupled as matrices 6074 and 6072, by which numbers the disc was sold.

But more of Globophon's English repertoire is known because the masters, besides being used for Festival Records, are also to be found on one variety of Apollo Records, on 10" Eclipse Records

and on Playwell Records. With those labels included, 82 titles have now been listed by Dave Moore and they reveal that four minor British Music Hall artists were recorded by the Schallplattenfabrik Globophon, they being Will Deller, Frank Lynne, Archie Pitt, and Will Terry (Alf Gordon).

The highest matrix stock number known is 6288, not far short of the 300 titles advised in September 1912, but way off the 400 announced in Leipzig.

*... to be continued.*

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**Howard Hope**

**Buying and selling  
the history of recorded sound for thirty years.**

# How Your Gramophone Records Are Made – *reprint, part 2*

*Editors' Note – This unattributed article has been taken from the book, Everyday Knowledge in Pictures, published c. 1930, by Odhams Press Ltd. The resources of the owners of the "His Master's Voice" label feature in some of the illustrations.*

## THE RECORDING ROOM

Meanwhile, what happens in the recording machine room? Here you see a large loudspeaker, perhaps a couple of recording machines, and a cupboard in which the blank waxes are stored. The turntable revolves at 78 revs. per minute, and this speed is checked both for revolutions and constancy by means of stroboscopic lines painted on the side of the turntable. When illuminated by electric light from

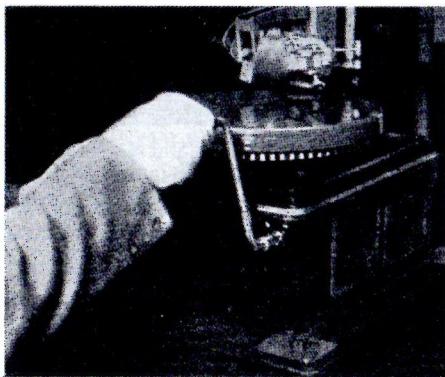


Figure 6. THE RECORDING MACHINE.  
Sound is recorded on the disk known as the wax master. The recording machine driven by a clockwork motor is wound up afresh for each record. The stroboscopic lines at the edge of the turntable test the constancy of speed, by appearing stationary when it revolves at the correct speed of 78 revolutions per minute.

AC mains current, these lines seem to stand still when the turntable is revolving at the correct speed.

The recording machine is really a screw-cutting lathe, in which the cutting tool is suspended above a horizontal turntable. The cutting stylus is vibrated electrically, and the machine itself is driven by a clockwork motor (Figure 6), the motive power being a heavy weight which is wound up afresh for every record. This is to ensure an absolutely constant speed for the turntable, for any variation would result in a fluctuating pitch, and the record would be spoilt.

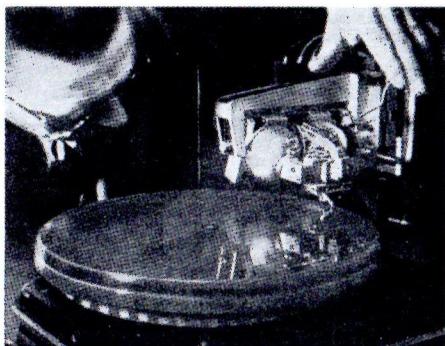


FIGURE 7. THE RECORDING MACHINE  
The cutting stylus, suspended above the turntable, is lowered onto a perfectly smooth wax blank.

The cutting stylus is mounted into an electrical recorder (Figure 7) which, in the form of electrical

impulses, transmits the amplifications, mixings and other refinements that the original current supplied by the microphone has undergone, in order to attain correct balance between the various frequencies.

#### THE RECORDING

Everything being in readiness in the studio, the recorder places a 10" or 12" blank wax on the turntable. This is so perfectly smooth that it is almost incredible that it has been shaved by a cutting machine. The greatest care has to be taken to keep the wax perfectly clean. A finger mark would ruin it, and even breathing would affect it. Figure 7 shows the blank on the turntable ready for the recording to begin, but before the recording is begun the wax is tested by cutting a few grooves on its outer edge and examining these under a powerful magnifying glass (Figure 8).



FIGURE 8. THE RECORDING MACHINE

The wax is tested by cutting a few grooves on the outer edge, these being examined under a magnifying glass.

To ensure silence in the studio, the recording expert sounds a buzzer. Then he lowers the cutter onto the revolving wax and a red light signals to the studio that the microphone is 'live' and that any sounds made in the studio will be recorded.

As the stylus cuts into the wax it throws off a tiny shaving which is immediately drawn into a suction tube, otherwise it might accumulate and clog the cutter (Figure 9).



FIGURE 9. THE RECORDING MACHINE

Fine wax shavings, which are thrown off by the stylus, are drawn away by suction to prevent them clogging the cutter.

The loudspeaker by the recording machine is in action, and as it is connected to the same electrical circuit as that feeding the cutting stylus, the recorder is able to hear exactly what is going onto the wax. This is his only means of knowing, since the recording cabinet is also sound-proof, its only connection with the studios being a double

window which is closed while the actual performance is in progress.

If he detects a fault or palpable mistake he signals to the studio and stops the machine, thus saving valuable time. If not, the recording proceeds until the wax is filled and the cutter lifted from the wax (Figure 10). The buzzer then gives the all clear and the red light in the



FIGURE 10. THE RECORDING MACHINE

When the recording has been successfully taken, the stylus is lifted carefully from the wax, and the signal is given in the studio accordingly. If, however, the recorder detects the slightest flaw, or a mistake during the recording, he signals to the studio to stop the performance, and halts the machine so that the correction can be made before the performers disperse.

#### THE PLAYBACK

The next stage is the playback, for which purpose a light electrical pick-up is used. The vibrations pass through an amplifier and are reproduced on the loudspeakers in the studio and the recording machine room. If the balance is at

studio goes out. Figure 11 shows the cut made by the stylus on the wax blank, and Figure 12 a portion of the record, highly magnified, showing the wave forms made by the stylus. The wax master is then examined to see if any faults have been made in the cutting (Figure 13).



Figure 11. The magnified profile of the groove in the wax.

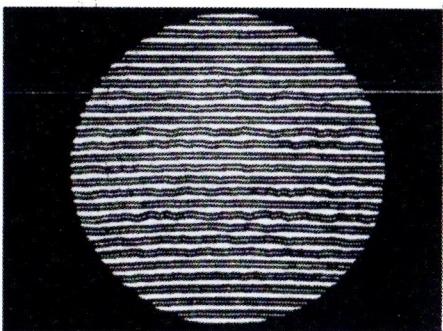


Figure 12. The magnified track made by the stylus, showing the wave forms made.

fault, the recorder makes his adjustments and the whole process is repeated. If everything goes well, the new wax, known as the 'wax master' is given its identification number and placed in a padded container for transport to the

record factory, where it undergoes the next stage in manufacture

(Figure 14).



FIGURE 13. INSPECTING FOR FAULTS IN CUTTING

The recorded wax master must not be played direct, but must be examined carefully by the recording engineer to whose expert eye its appearance reveals any faults in the cutting.



FIGURE 14. THE WAX MASTER GOES TO THE RECORD FACTORY

The wax master is packed in a padded, hermetically-sealed container to prevent damage in transport, each one having first been given its own number for identification purposes.

## SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

Sometimes, when a performance is of a particularly exacting nature, or a large orchestra is employed, duplicate recording machines are used, as shown in Figure 15. Then, if the playback is satisfactory, the unplayed wax on the second machine is used as the master and a further recording is not necessary. Since only a perfect

result can be accepted, however, a half-day's hard work may sometimes result in only a single satisfactory wax.

Naturally, the ideal conditions for recording are in the specially designed studios, where performances can be repeated and adjustments made until the best possible result is achieved.

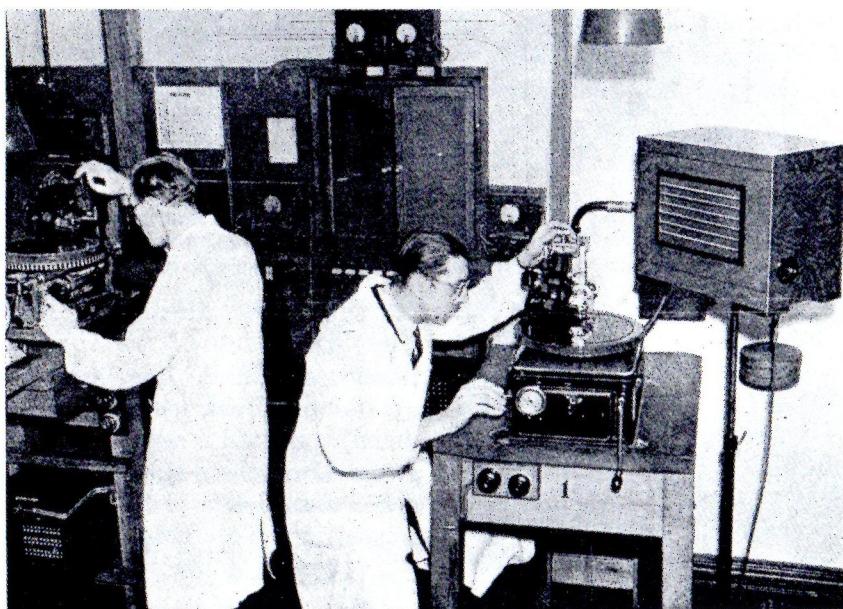


FIGURE 15. RECORDING IN DUPLICATE

When a performance cannot be repeated, or is broken at the end of a side, duplicate recording machines are used. Then, if the playback is satisfactory, the wax on the second machine is used as a master.

Sometimes, it is necessary to record away from the studios. It may be an excerpt from a variety show, when a comedian needs the atmosphere of a receptive audience, or an outdoor function such as a Military

Tattoo in which several hundred bandsmen are taking part. The Coronation Service [in 1937? - Ed.] was recorded over a land line at the time when the BBC broadcast was taking place.

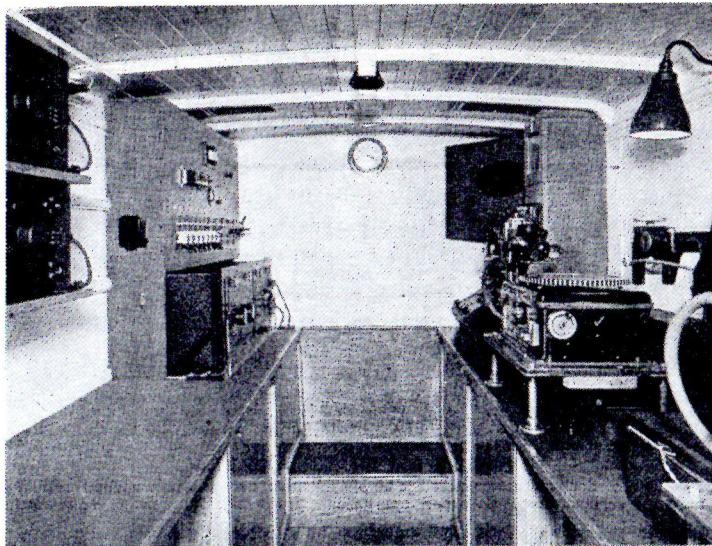


FIGURE 16. MOBILE UNIT FOR RECORDING OUTSIDE BROADCASTS

This mobile recording van, used for outside broadcasts, contains a generating plant, recording machines, control panels, amplifiers, wax-heating cabinet, telephones, and all the equipment necessary for electrical recording, compactly arranged to occupy a minimum of space.

For the outside broadcasts a mobile recording unit (Figure 16) is used. This is a large van containing generating plant, recording machines, control panels, amplifiers, wax heating cabinets, telephone equipment and all the paraphernalia necessary for electrical recording. The van is also equipped with hydraulic apparatus to lift the wheels from the ground and minimise vibration.

In these cases, when it is not possible to pre-arrange the performance in requisite lengths each to fit a side of a record, the recording is continuous, and the following side is commenced while the previous side is still being recorded. The whole recording is also taken in duplicate. Afterwards,

chosen portions are re-recorded on to fresh waxes.

Land (telephone) line recordings are taken direct to the recording room. treated as continuous performances, and similarly divided and re-recorded.

This re-recording or transferring of one record to another is a modern practice, and is now carried out with such efficiency that it is difficult to say which is the original and which the transfer.

It is useful in many ways. For example, a record may have proved just too long for commercial purposes in which set standards have to be fixed for economical production. Yet it may be impossible to shorten the music by

a single bar. Such a record could be transferred by using a slightly finer recording groove, to keep it within the required limits.

#### ELECTRICAL 'RE-CREATIONS' OF ACOUSTIC PERFORMANCES

Perhaps the most notable instances have been the 're-creations' of recorded performances made in the old days of mechanical recording. The weakest part of these older recordings was the orchestral accompaniments. By re-recording and super-imposing a new orchestral accompaniment, at the same time correcting electrically some of the faults of the older vocal recording, a series of really amazing results was obtained.

The process was, however, extremely difficult, particularly for the conductor. In the normal way he could listen to the living singer, watching and following every variation in tone and tempo. For a 're-creation' he had first to memorise every note of the older recording in order to know exactly the smallest idiosyncrasies of the artist. Then, listening to the old record by means of earphones, he had to guide the orchestra, so that the new accompaniment completely obliterated the one on the older recording.

The old introduction was cut out entirely and a new one substituted, a matter of very precise timing. Although successful, it was found that only a very limited number of older recordings repaid the

enormous amount of time and effort involved in the 're-creation'.

#### CREATING THE DIES FOR THE PRESSES

It is now necessary to transfer the delicate traces of the sound waves to some stronger medium from which metal disks can be made for the pressing of any number of copies.

The recorded wax is first carefully coated with graphite to make it conductive, a process calling for great care and skill, and a central metal pin is inserted to form the anode (Figure 17).



FIGURE 17. HOW A COPY IS MADE

To transfer the delicate traces of the sound waves to a stronger medium, the soft wax goes through an electro-plating process requiring great skill. It is first coated with graphite, and a metal pin placed in the centre, as above, makes an anode contact for electrical conduction.

It is then placed in a special holder and lowered into an electro-plating bath as shown in Figure 18, where it revolves slowly for some hours, during which a shell of copper is

deposited or grown onto the recorded surface of the wax.

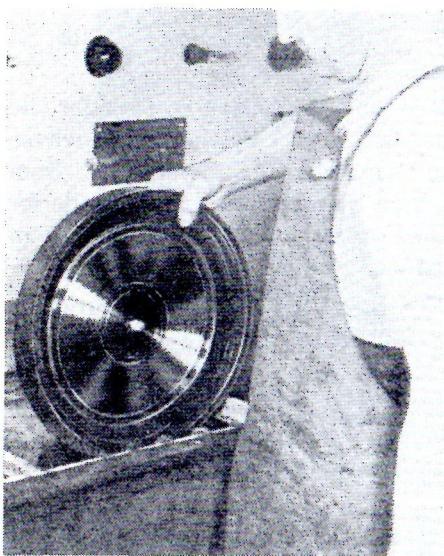


FIGURE 18. THE COPPER SHELL IS FORMED.  
The graphite-coated wax is lowered into the electro-plating bath. A shell of copper is deposited on its surface forming the negative master. Every detail is duplicated on the copper shell, which is stripped from the wax. This operation calls for great care, to avoid damage to the wax.

Every detail is duplicated on the copper shell, which is stripped from the wax. This operation usually results in damage to the wax, so that it is obvious why so much care must be taken over this part of the process.

If we regard the original wax as a 'positive', this first copper shell is a 'negative' and from it, further positives could be pressed. This shell, however, is too precious to be used for pressing records, as it is now the only record left. Therefore, the only pressings made from it are

used for musical and technical testing purposes.

If these tests prove satisfactory, the negative copper shell, known as the 'master' is then put into a further plating bath and another positive shell deposited onto it. Before this, it is 'flashed' with a thin coating of a separating medium to prevent the second shell from adhering to its surface. Figure 19 shows the copper shell being separated after this operation.



FIGURE 19. NEGATIVE 'MASTER' BECOMES  
POSITIVE 'MOTHER'.

On the copper shell a further coating is laid which is positive. From this (known as the 'mother') any number of working matrices can be obtained. This 'mother' is then treated similarly, and from it grow the dies from which the actual records are pressed.

Shell no. 2 being a positive, is no good for pressing records, which would all be negatives, but, known as the 'mother', it forms the means from which further negative working matrices can be obtained.

This 'mother' is then treated similarly, from it growing the dies from which the records are pressed.

The copper surface of the working matrix would soon wear under the great pressure used to obtain the records and it is hardened by a nickel deposit. The centre hole is then drilled, another delicate operation calling for the utmost precision, as the slightest variation from the true centre would cause the record to 'swing', which would result in a record that played in a wavering pitch.

The working matrix is then backed up with metal and prepared for fitting into the die of a record press. It is examined under a microscope for any flaws (Figure 20).

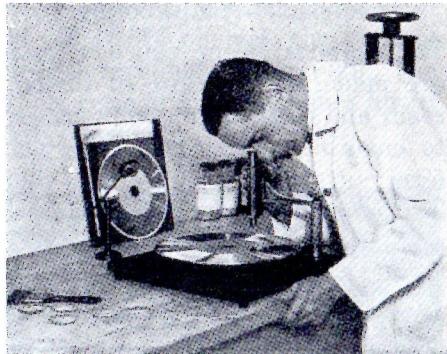


FIGURE 20. THE FINISHED MATRIX IS SCRUTINISED UNDER A MICROSCOPE.

The working matrix is backed up with metal, but before fitting it into the record press, microscopic examination is necessary, as the slightest flaw would soon be magnified so as to become a serious one under the pressure of 1250 lb. per sq. in., at which the press is operated.

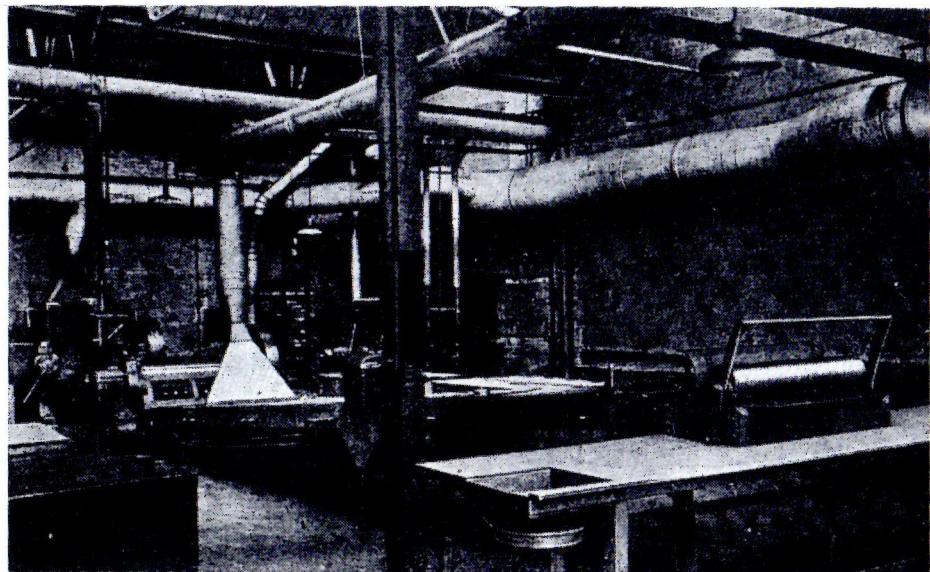


FIGURE 21. MIXING THE INGREDIENTS OF WHICH RECORDS ARE MADE.

The brittle sheets from which the 'biscuits' are cut are composed of finely ground ingredients which have been mixed into a plastic dough between heated rollers. The dough is then passed through a further set of water-cooled rollers to reduce the temperature back to normal.

### PRESSING THE RECORDS

The material from which records are made is a mixture of shellac, resin and other ingredients graded to ensure an even texture, which form a black substance that becomes plastic when made hot, and hard when cooled.

The assembled ingredients are first ground finely, and then mixed into plastic dough between heated rollers. This is then passed through a further set of water-cooled rollers, from which it emerges in thin, brittle sheets (Figure 21). These sheets are cut into rectangular 'biscuits' containing enough material for a 10" or 12" record (Figure 22).

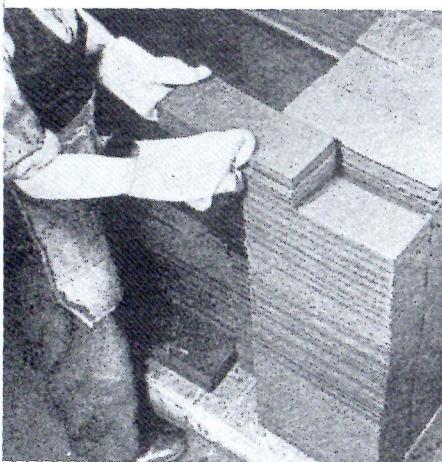


FIGURE 22. THE RAW MATERIAL.

After the mixture has been rolled into sheets of even thickness it is cut into rectangular 'biscuits' containing enough to make a ten- or twelve-inch record.

All is now ready for the final stage, the actual pressing of the record

from the working matrix. The power used is hydraulic pressure, and the press consists of two heavy steel jaws hinged like the covers of a book, into which the working matrices, one for each side of the record, can be fitted. The top plate also holds the peg which makes the centre hole. Behind the matrices are cavities through which first steam, and then cold water can be circulated.

The operator has a supply of the requisite size of 'biscuit', one piece of which he places on a hot steel plate beside the record press, so that it becomes plastic (Figure 23).



FIGURE 23. FINAL STAGES IN MAKING A RECORD

The press, driven by hydraulic pressure, consists of steel jaws, hinged like the covers of a book. 'Biscuits' of material are laid on the hot plate of the press.

At the same time, the matrices are steam heated. Record labels are placed in position, one in the centre of each matrix with the printed surface outwards. The softened biscuit is then removed from the hot plate, and shaped into a ball, which is then placed on to the centre of the bottom label, as shown in Figure 24.



FIGURE 24. FINAL STAGES IN MAKING A RECORD  
When plastic, the 'biscuit' is removed from the hot plate and shaped into a ball which is placed in the centre of the bottom label. To press the record, an even pressure is applied while hot, and the dies are water cooled immediately after, so that the record can be removed with ease.

The jaws are closed and an even pressure of 1250 lb. to the square inch is applied. Almost immediately, the matrices are

water cooled, and when the jaws of the press are opened, the shining disk is revealed (Figure 25). The whole cycle of pressing takes about thirty seconds.

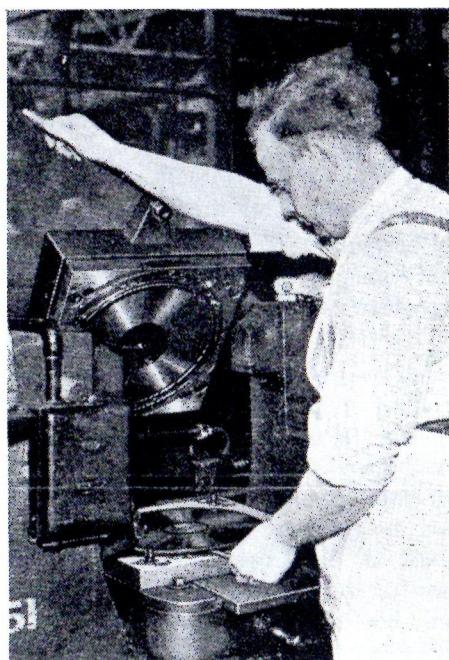


FIGURE 25. THE FINISHED ARTICLE.  
The jaws of the press open and the shining disk is revealed ready for smoothing.

#### REPRODUCTION

The reproduction of a record back into sound is somewhat of a reversal of the recording. The needle point picks up the vibrations and transmits them to a diaphragm, whence they are amplified by passing through a tone arm and a scientifically proportioned horn, finally making their way out of the instrument. ■



FIGURE 26. FINISHING GRAMOPHONE RECORDS BY SMOOTHING OFF EDGES.

The record is removed from the press, and after the superfluous material has been broken away, it is put onto a buffering machine for the edge to be smoothed.

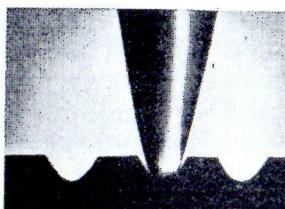


FIGURE 27. HOW A NEEDLE SHOULD FIT THE GROOVE.

This new steel needle exactly fits the sound track, illustrating why needles must be changed frequently to preserve the record.

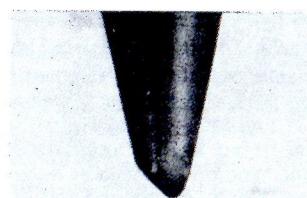


FIGURE 28. THE POINT OF A WORN NEEDLE. A much worn needle becomes too large for the sound track and will damage the groove.

# The 'Artistry' of Stan Kenton on 78

## by Paul Royal

You either love him or loath him – there doesn't seem to be any middle ground.

Well, I changed my opinion. As a classically trained trumpet player, I couldn't (or wouldn't) listen to his 'discords' for many years. I thought his music 'too progressive' although I love jazz, and concentrated on collecting Goodman, Shaw, Dorsey and Miller on 78s.

My best mate Simon is a fine trombone player whom I have known for thirty years. We met as teenagers in our local brass band. He had a double LP of Kenton which he kept trying to get me to listen to. He thought I should broaden my musical horizons, but I wouldn't listen to it, or him.

We joined a new big band in Manchester: he took the 1<sup>st</sup> Trombone chair; I took the 2<sup>nd</sup> Trumpet chair (jazz soloist), as I wanted to play the improvised solos. Imagine my surprise when after only a few weeks, no less than eight Kenton scores were brought to the band by one of the sax section!

With great trepidation, I lifted my trumpet to my lips and we played through *Eager Beaver*. I was 'hooked' and turned to Simon and said 'The man was a genius!' Simon doesn't own that double LP any more: it resides in my library with another 100 LPs and 78s now!

**Stanley Newcomb Kenton** was born in Wichita, Kansas on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 1912. He was raised in Los Angeles and

was taught piano by his mother, Stella and various local teachers, then with a theatre organist, Frank Hurst, and later with Earl 'Fatha' Hines. He wrote his first arrangement aged 16, in 1928, and after playing with various local bands, started his professional career with Everett Hoagland in 1934. He later spent a year with Gus Arnhelm and played in the bands of Johnny Davis and Vido Musso (who later became the mainstay of Kenton's sax section).

In 1941, Kenton formed his own band and secured a residency at the Balboa Beach Rendezvous Ballroom, whence he also broadcast. His new band then embarked on a cross-country tour to culminate in a long residency at the famous Roseland Ballroom, in New York. However, after ten days, the management of the Roseland closed him out. Thank goodness he had recorded nine sides in two sessions for Decca, on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1941 and 13<sup>th</sup> February 1942, in Hollywood.

The recordings were an immediate success, and were issued in Britain on Brunswick. Even these first sides gave a hint of what was to come. Listen to *The Nango* (on 03307) and *Taboo* (on 03329), which latter he later re-recorded for Capitol.

After the release of *Artistry in Rhythm* (on CL.13012), his first release on Capitol in November 1943, the band found its signature tune and national reputation. The early 'trade mark' sound of *staccato* reeds is particularly

noticeable on *Painted Rhythm*, the flip side of the infamous *Peanut Vendor* (on CL.13016) – surely a ‘double-A’ disc, if there was such a thing, then!

Throughout 1944/5, many vocal numbers were recorded featuring June Christy, Anita O’Day and Gene Howard, including *Tampico* by June Christy, on the flip side of *Eager Beaver* (on CL.13039), the first Kenton chart I ever played and still a favourite.

In 1946, Pete Rugolo joined the band as arranger and Kenton began to do far less writing himself. After the dissolution of the band in 1947, Kenton fronted bands on a far less permanent basis and spent most of 1949 in retirement – short-lived, as he continued touring, teaching, playing and fronting a band until shortly before his death on the 25<sup>th</sup> August 1979, aged 67 years.

The Capitol years saw, in all, 85 78s released in Britain (seventy-eight on 10" and seven on 12"), with fabulous musicians including Maynard Ferguson, ‘Shorty’ Rogers, Frank Rosolino and Vido Musso, along with a list of top-flight players and arrangers who, virtually without exception, had long and sparkling careers in Jazz, Radio, Television and Film.

One unusual record which appeared in 1953, taken from the New Concepts album, was *Prologue, This Is an Orchestra*, issued on two 78s (CL.13858/9). In this recording, Stan narrates a sort of ‘Young Persons’ Guide’ to his band at the time – each player is introduced, is given an appraisal of their character, and plays a short passage in turn. Frank Rosolino is described as ‘A fellow who has few, if any, moody moments’. Ironically, Frank

was to take his own life within a few years. Listen to him on *Frank Speaking* (on CL.14540) – a superb piece of trombone playing. Whatever drove him to suicide robbed the music world of a great talent.

I met Maynard Ferguson at a concert a few years ago at the now-demolished Davenport Theatre in Stockport, Cheshire. I had brought along one of Maynard’s LPs and the 78, *Hot Canary/What’s New* (CL.13611) for him to sign. After the concert, a long line of well-wishers formed to meet him. When I gave him the LP to sign, he said nothing except ‘Who do I sign it to?’, but when I produced the 78, his face lit up and he proceeded to tell the story of its recording.

It turned out to be the first ever record to carry his own name, as ‘Maynard Ferguson with the Kenton Orchestra’.

He told me there had been an arrangement between him and Stan in the studio. Kenton wanted him to play *Hot Canary*, which Ferguson hated, and Ferguson wanted to play *What’s New*, which Kenton hated! A compromise was reached – *Canary* was played for Kenton and *What’s New* for Ferguson, but the record would be released under Maynard’s name ‘with the Kenton Orchestra’. This was a fascinating insight into a recording session and a personal anecdote few will know about. He was delighted to see the 78 in good condition, with a new cardboard sleeve, and told me as his first record, it was worth a lot of money. Little did he know I had bought it for 75 pence! I suppose it is worth far more now, being autographed on its sleeve.

Milton 'Shorty' Rogers was a major influence on Kenton's swinging style. Born in 1924, he studied trumpet, composition and arranging at the Los Angeles Conservatory. After Army service, 1943-5, he played in both Woody Herman's and Charlie Barnet's bands before joining Kenton in 1950. After playing for a year and a half, he became one of Kenton's main arrangers and produced stunning, swinging charts. Listen to him on *Jolly Rogers* (on CL.13334) and *Viva Prado* (on CL.13476).

Vido Musso was born in Sicily in 1913, but was raised in America from 1920. He joined Benny Goodman in 1936, and played tenor sax for many years, often quitting or being fired by Benny. He joined Woody Herman in 1942 and Kenton in 1945, playing superb solos with a full tone in a Hawkins style. He made frequent attempts to form his own band (employing Kenton on piano in one of them) but these were all short-lived. Hear him on many Kenton sides, but in particular, *Intermission Riff* (on CL.13191), the brilliant 'booting' solo on *Painted Rhythm* (on CL.13016), and *Concerto to End All Concertos* (on CL.13130).

This latter piece (on 2 sides of a 78) is as the title suggests, a jazz concerto and was recorded as a 'concert' piece rather than dance music. Kenton had decided the band should be listened to, not danced to ('I prefer the audience to pay attention to the music instead of their minds on their own performance on the dance floor.') This piece is a gem amongst Kenton's early repertoire and an excellent introduction to the Orchestra's brilliance.

Stan toured Britain in 1956 – I own two commemorative 78 sleeves from that tour, one signed, with what I hope is Kenton's signature. This was the first time a US band had toured Britain since the 1930s, due to a union ban which Stan helped to break. He toured Europe and Britain for many years until shortly before his death.

During the 1973 tour, while he was on stage in Nottingham, it was Stan's 61<sup>st</sup> birthday. He wanted no fuss, but the band had other ideas. As he introduced the fourth number, Dick Shearer slipped out of his trombone chair, gave the band a 'downbeat', and *Happy Birthday To You*, a swinging and obviously well-rehearsed 5-minute arrangement was played. Stan, stunned at first, sat down at the piano, and fought back his tears.

After the enthusiastic and prolonged applause from the audience, Stan asked, 'When did you get to rehearse that?' The reply from one of the band had the audience in stitches, 'When you were asleep!' 'When I was asleep?' he said incredulously!

By this period, he was of course, more a grandfather figure to his young band, now made up mainly of former students of his numerous summer schools, which he organised at universities across the States. He left his scores in his will to university education, believing the future of jazz belonged in the hands of the young.

The value of Kenton's music has varied greatly according to the arrangers he used. The music has fallen generally into three categories –

◊ first, the ambitious Concert works, such as those of Bob Graettinger, e.g.,

*City of Glass* and *This Modern World*, only issued on LP due to their length;

- ◊ secondly, the simple, short pieces that attempted to broaden his appeal to a wider, commercial audience, and
- ◊ thirdly, the swinging arrangements by Shorty Rogers, Bill Holman and Gerry Mulligan, that place the band on the same level as Woody Herman, featuring numerous improvised jazz solos. It is on this third level, that Kenton made his most valid contribution to the jazz world.

His band served as a workshop and incubator for many writers and musicians who achieved their first major exposure

through him, and who went on to become the top arrangers and session men in America and beyond.

Many – as I, at first – will not listen to Kenton's music, believing it raucous and loud. But just listening to a few sides will convince most of the sheer brilliance of tone, colour and musicality that were his alone. On 78, one can sit back and listen to the sheer '**artistry of Stan Kenton**'. ■

**Footnote** My collection of Kenton 78s is not complete – I am still 2 Brunswicks and 24 Capitols short. I have many duplicates, and would swap or sell them for any of my missing 78s, if any member can help me.

## The Odyssey of Caroline Hatchard, parts 1 & 2 – Errata

Unfriendly gremlins crept into the article about Caroline Hatchard in the last two issues, so with apologies to both the author and to readers, here are corrections:-

1. p.217, 1<sup>st</sup>. column, 1<sup>st</sup>. para, 8<sup>th</sup> line -      '11<sup>th</sup>' should be '13<sup>th</sup>';
2. p.260, photo caption -      '1913' should be '1910';
3. p.262, 5<sup>th</sup> line -      'Priemé's' should be 'Pierné's';
4. p.262, 6<sup>th</sup> line -      'high-flying' should be 'high-lying';
5. p.264, 2<sup>nd</sup> column, final para, 4<sup>th</sup> line -      'became crashing down' should be 'came crashing down';
6. p.265, CH at the Proms, item no. 4 -      'Emani involami' should be 'Ernani involami';
7. p.266, 2<sup>nd</sup> column, final para, 5<sup>th</sup> line -      should be 'December';
8. p.266, 2<sup>nd</sup> column, final para, 8<sup>th</sup> line -      'Emani involami' should be 'Ernani involami'.

## ADVERTISEMENT

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# Soundings

A selection of miscellaneous and anonymous facts and opinions, contributed by members

## Boot polish or linseed oil?

What to use to clean and restore rexine coverings on portables? Some use boot polish: I have tried this, but it is in my view not very good, insofar as it fails to clean. However, when you apply linseed oil, the dirt comes off on the cloth you apply the oil with. It soaks up the dirt, and after perhaps 75 years, there is plenty of it. The article I relied on regarding linseed oil was printed in 1932. It did not specify raw or boiled oil, but my tests show that raw oil, as used on cricket bats, works better than boiled.

I apply it with a tissue, as any cloth or tissue soaked in linseed oil (boiled or raw) can ignite spontaneously. The used tissue can safely be flushed down the loo, rather than risk a fire. Recently, I tried sesame oil and this seems preferable to linseed oil. Results are better, there is no special risk of fire, and the smell is most pleasing, as might be expected from a condiment.

## Cleaning and lubricating spring motors

Having looked into the question of lubrication, I believe it is easiest to clean out old grease with a high detergent engine oil as used in diesel engines, e.g., Rotello, and to relubricate with extreme pressure oil, e.g., EP 90. As well as the spring, the governor worm and especially the lower worm as used in a vertical spring motor, are best lubricated with EP oil. So too, are any thrust bearings. At one time, molybdenum disulphide was in vogue, e.g. Molyslip oil and grease, but this now seems outdated.

There is also XP oil – provided there are no safety issues arising from flammability. (I believe it was spilt XP oil that caught fire in the Austrian ski train disaster). I know of one

enthusiast who uses it mixed with grease on springs, and on its own on worms. Even on the lower worm, he finds it durable, not calling for re-oiling.

## Safety or Originality?

There was a hybrid machine – a portable radiogram – with a battery amplifier/radio and a spring wound motor. It was made by Farringdon Tools and marketed as an Alba. I can remember it worked quite well on battery, but then it was far from economical. On mains, it tended to catch fire, sometimes on the shop counter! Fire hazard apart, it would not begin to meet present-day electrical safety standards. It only played 78s.

Such machines do not seem to appear on the second-hand market, but if you do find one and decide to use it on mains electricity, forget originality, and totally rebuild the mains power supply system!

## Spring-wound or Electric Motors, Speed Stability, and Hum

My audiologist friend says that no spring motor gives him the speed stability he requires: however, his Collaro AC 47 motor does, and hum is not audible from it. Of course, in a big EMG or Expert, hum may be revealed. Certainly, the AC/DC Paillard motor in the EMG Mark 4 shows no hum out of the horn, but there is general motor noise if you hold your ear against the side of the cabinet. Yet general motor noise is just as audible from a 130 cabinet with a spring motor! The modern hi-fi turntable with a 78 speed is very quiet indeed, with very low hum, both mechanical and induced, but it is intended for stylus pressures of 5gm maximum. So to seek very low noise is to seek the gold at the end of the rainbow.

## **Thoughts on Buying a Portable**

I have used a Dual mains and spring powered machine, which was very good. It was brought back from Germany in 1946. It had a metal diaphragm soundbox and the sound was remarkably like a 101 with a Columbia No. 24 soundbox. But so far, I have never seen another.

Then there were a Decca with a Telesmatic soundbox, and an early 1950s Decca with an electric motor. Both the Deccas were mediocre. Some suggest that only the HMV 101s, 102s, and perhaps the 99s are worth considering. I would add to this the many Columbia models, both pre-amalgamation and after. Until the 101, Columbia portables were far preferable to HMVs.

Perhaps if portability is an issue, it is best to avoid models with a cast iron motor chassis made before Schoenberg became UK Columbia's chief engineer.

For a reflex horn Columbia portable, an honest dealer should ask less than half the price he would ask for an HMV 101; likewise, about half the price for a pre-amalgamation Columbia with a full internal horn, and 70-80% of the price for a post-amalgamation Columbia. Against this, it might be fair to ask a premium above my suggested valuation for a pre-amalgamation Columbia, due to the use of a captive fold-away winding handle, which many consider a great bonus.

There is a Columbia near version of the 102, which used a No. 24 soundbox, and another used a No. 16 soundbox. These command scarcity value, but if you like the sound, you may feel it worth while to pay the extra. However, before you buy, listen first to a 101 with a No. 24 soundbox. Or, for an even better choice, but hard to find, a Melrose soundbox fitted to a 101.

Whether this became the Melrose later, I cannot say. However, the Melrose is less suitable, unfortunately, as it is easy to find.

What of the Melrose portable? The soundbox is good, but the horn is very poor. I had one in 1930.

Of the HMVs, I much prefer the 101: the 102 is louder but less refined. A 101 fitted with a National Band Orchorsol soundbox is as loud, but again the sound is less refined.

I have not yet mentioned the National Band portables. In the late 1940s, I heard their top-of-the-range portable and it was good, yet they made cheap and meagre machines too. I am told that National Band gramophones were made by Boosey & Hawkes. If so, it is strange that they made poor as well as good ones. I have been told that they bought in cheap ones and affixed their name.

## **More on Columbias and Grease**

If buying a post-amalgamation Columbia portable, check the swivel of the tone arm. If, as is likely, it has no ball bearings, it depends on grease for free movement and to provide a seal. By now, the original grease will be in poor condition, so dismantle the bearing, clean it well with solvent, dry it well and relubricate with lithium grease. Do not be tempted to take a short cut and 'top up' the original grease (which is sodium-based) with lithium grease. The two are not compatible.

Some repairers prefer vaseline and claim it can be added to existing sodium grease so you need not dismantle the bearing. However, I regard re-greasing without dismantling as a cheapjack job. If you dismantle, I have no experience to tell me if lithium grease or vaseline is the better choice or if either is as good. What I know is clear is that you must attend to this swivel if you want to get the best from the portable. Perhaps readers can report on which lubricant/sealant is preferable.

# Book Review

## Catalogue of HMV 'B' Series Records by Frank Andrews and Ernie Bayly

Here is the label discography many of you have been waiting for, the one label you all have on your shelves. While some discographers like myself enjoy getting immersed in the more complex and obscure byways of our hobby, from time to time we are brought down to earth by a reader complaining that his local junkshop has never produced a Citizen or Ludgate record, just piles of plum label HMVs. Here then is the answer to your prayers.

The series began at B101 in September 1912 and finished at B10968 in February 1958. It was not a continuous chronological series, being split into six separate and overlapping blocks, of which my own favourite is the one from B4501 to B4999. This included many fine jazz recordings which could be ordered through your local HMV dealer.

You might also be lucky enough to find one of the Private Recordings, numbered B2 to B47, and recorded during the years 1928 to 1940 – a strange assortment starting with the Secretary to the King of Afghanistan singing Persian songs and ending with the sounds of the girls and boys in the Examination Room at the Gramophone Co. factory at Hayes and the sounds of the men working in the Press Room. A pity the masters were destroyed in 1961. I have had other private recordings from various periods with a variety of labels, including one of the yellow label type by Mark Hambourg demonstrating different pianos but none was given a 'B' number. A few years ago, I was visited by an elderly local contralto clutching two copies of a Private Recording she had made at the EMI showroom in Oxford Street and which she wanted put on tape. When I asked her if she could remember approximately when it was

made she produced the receipt which had been in a side pocket in her purse since October 1952. It showed she had paid one guinea for the services of an accompanist and £3 10s for her two records. Perhaps Frank can tell us more about their private recordings and why only these few were allotted 'B' numbers.

I suspect Frank Andrews, Ernie Bayly and the latter's father must have spent at least 30 years piecing together this hefty listing of the 'B' series from catalogues, supplements, the EMI files, and information from other collectors. The catalogue includes dates of recording, issue and deletion as well as composer credits. As there is no pagination I cannot tell you how many pages there are, but it's a good inch thick and just over 8 inches by 11. The cover is a stiff glossy card with an attractive design and an almost complete set of 'B' label photographs. I say 'almost' as I understand Roger Thorne has one further example.

No matter how careful one is, few publications are free from typographical errors, sometimes the fault of the compilers, at times due to an editor with more zeal than spelling ability (H&D ed. excepted) [! – Ed.] and, more rarely these days – the fault of the printer. I do feel in this case that after years of sterling effort a few months of circulating the final draft would have eliminated the bulk of the spelling errors and some of the other basic errors, such as changing Blanche Calloway's identity and sex into those of her brother Cab (B6114). While the general collector will not be bothered whether the takes shown are correct there are many who are interested in the existence and acquisition of alternative takes. In the case of local recordings HMV

seem to have pressed issues from different takes more often than we used to think and this was seldom recorded in their files. Dance band collectors have been noting these for some years but few are listed in this catalogue. With Victor takes the position is less clear as the take is not always shown. If one holds the record so that the Victor matrix in the wax is at 6 o'clock the take should appear upside down in the wax at 3 o'clock. The Gramophone Co. chose the same place to impress their stamper letter, just to make life difficult for future researchers. They also failed to note the take used in their files. In many instances the compilers have used Brian Rust's *Victor Master Book* but have, unfortunately, misread the information. As he explains, Brian lists the number of takes (attempts) made by the artist for each title at a particular session. He does not show the actual take used. Unfortunately, in several instances, the compilers have taken the highest take to be the issued take, which it wasn't. As the artist sometimes came back at a later date to make more attempts, the recording date is also occasionally wrong. Purchasers of the HMV book, particularly any American collectors, should not think that HMV is a treasure trove of alternative takes to the Victor issues. There are nevertheless, Victor recordings on HMV which were not issued on Victor.

However, these and other matters, such as which issues are dubbings and not master pressings, are of more interest to serious collectors (or advanced anoraks, as some of you would have it). No label discography has ever been published which is the last word on the subject. Collectors will be swapping additional information on HMV Bs for years to come and anybody who cares to send me a SAE can have my initial two-pennyworth. This book is a very worthy and welcome addition to the library. Ernie Bayly has been of great service to the discographical world

over many, many years and if this is his swan song, it's a fine achievement to finish on. Sorry, Frank, you can't retire yet, there's a lot more to be done.

I will leave the last word to an artist who recorded many HMV Bs. Our books are full of numbers and dates but seldom contain information on the artists or what it was like for them to make the records. This is an extract from a private letter written in 1948. 'My goodness but how the dreadful war has changed everybody or is it that they have grown older. The HMV has not the slightest resemblance to what it was ten years ago. There is not the fun in the sessions. One is "stood over" by a recording manager and the Orchestra must not do any more than four titles at any one session of 3 hours duration'.

The artist? Peter Dawson. ■

**Arthur Badrock**

'Catalogue of HMV 'B' Series Records' by Frank Andrews & Ernie Bayly; first published in Great Britain in 2000 by CLPGS Ltd. ISBN no. 0-900-883-63-X. Obtainable from CLPGS Bookshop at £39.95, plus postage.

## ADVERTISEMENT

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# CD Review

## Oscar Natzka – The Definitive Collection: Volume 2 – 1942-1950

Just imagine – opening the doors of a long-locked warehouse and being confronted by the Schlumpf Collection – all those Bugattis lost to the world for a generation, and now rediscovered, restored.

Such is the experience awaiting those who love Oscar Natzka's inimitable voice as it comes to us from these two new CDs, which complete the Natzka archive. [Volume 1 was reviewed in *HILLANDALE NEWS* no. 233, Spring 2001, p.283 – Ed.] Previously unavailable items succeed each other in glorious profusion, now and then interspersed with old favourites, all confirming the superb quality of this mighty voice, and emphasising the tragedy of its premature loss.

It is not merely the range of the voice that is so remarkable, those great rolling notes that seem to come from depths only Poseidon himself could have known – so effortlessly they seem to be produced, that we have to make a powerful effort to perceive the discipline and control that are the secret of the

freedom Natzka seems to express. The effect is simply wonderfully satisfying.

As in Volume 1, the range of material collected is wide, from full commercial recordings to scratchy film sound tracks, all excellently re-worked. Listening to these recordings has been like enjoying a meal prepared by a world class chef. It titillates the palate, and leaves the appetite satisfied – nearly. If only there had been just a little bit more.

Order your set now from George Woolford, whilst stocks last. You won't be disappointed! ■

**Frank James**

'Oscar Natzka: The Definitive Collection: Volume Two – 1942-1950'; published by the National Library of New Zealand, P.O. Box 1467, Wellington, New Zealand. E-mail: <[www.natlib.govt.nz](http://www.natlib.govt.nz)>. Available from the CLPGS Bookshop.

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|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| <b>Midlands Group</b>        | Phil Bennett; [REDACTED], Whitmore Reans, WOLVERHAMPTON; WV6 0JW.<br>Tel: [REDACTED]  |
| <b>Northern Group</b>        | John Astin; [REDACTED] Bilton, HARRÓGATE; HG1 3LL.<br>Tel: [REDACTED]<br>Or contact [REDACTED] Longridge, PRESTON;<br>PR3 3BP.<br>Tel: [REDACTED] |
| <b>West of England Group</b> | Paul Collenette; [REDACTED] Topsham, EXETER; EX3 0DA.<br>Tel/fax: [REDACTED]  |

# CD & Book Review

**Carlo Buti, *Canzonettista*  
born 1902, Montelupo (near Florence)  
died 1962, Bergeggi**

In the late 1930s, 1940s and 1950s Buti had more entries in the Columbia catalogue in Italy than any other vocalist. Enrico Borsetti declares that Carlo Buti's is the most recorded Italian voice on 78 rpm records, and yet today he is virtually unremembered. This selection of 60 songs on 3 CDs (a fourth is in preparation) reminds us of how appealing he was.

The CDs are entitled –

1. Celebri Canzoni Napoletane
2. Celebri Canzoni Italiane
3. Celebri Melodie Romanze,

and seemed to me to be well produced, even the earlier records which he made for Edison Bell in 1928/29. We do not need the usual CD notes because the set comes with three attractive booklets, together comprising approximately 320 pages, which provide biographical and artistic details, and a 'first' discography compiled by Borsetti and Tom Peel. A bonus is provided by the inclusion of many charming photographs of Buti and others. The booklets were written by Maurizio Tiberi of TIMACLUB and the whole project is a joint effort by Italian collectors led by Enrico Borsetti who conducted wide research over many years. Those of us who have done this know how expensive such 'labours of love' can be in time, effort, and money, and I feel that this project has been very successful.

Buti was, following the death of his father in World War I, brought up solely by his mother. As a lad he took on little jobs with the local milkman and baker to raise some money. He toyed with the idea of becoming a boxer but fortunately soon changed his mind, though he followed the sport avidly throughout his life. He then worked as a

renciolo – a sandman – whose job was to dig out sand and gravel from the river banks which was then delivered to builders. This job was usually combined with that of ferryman for those parts of the Arno which lacked sufficient bridges. I was charmed by the tale of how, during the balmy evenings the young workers would sing – for the love of it. These impromptu concerts were enjoyed by locals and visitors who were taking their evening stroll. Tiberi recalls witnessing such scenes in other towns – Naples and Rome. If one closes one's eyes and listens to Buti, one is there!!



Clarity and tunefulness are both there in the records and also strength, though not the weight and metal of the true operatic singers, but a voice of velvety texture. He possessed good technique and was praised by Toscanini and Schipa. In *The Story of Italian Song*,

edited by Fabbri, Buti is given an entire chapter by no less than Rudolfo Celletti. He was a *canzonettista*, following Daniele Serra and Enzo Fusco, contemporary with Emilio Livi and Luciano Tajoli, and followed by such singers as Luciano Virgili and Claudio Villa, and so falls clearly into a strong main current of Italian musical life.

The songs on the CDs range through parlour romances, genuine Neapolitan songs and popular ballads of the time. On CD 1 I was particularly taken by *Luna Nova* (Di Giacomo/P. Costa) for its soft affecting singing, and also a very reflective *Core 'ngrato* which reminded me very much of one of my favourite versions, by Tino Rossi. *O Balcone è Napule* (E. Murolo/E. de Curtis) is admirable because of his deft handling of words and his production *sul labbro*, like

Schipa. *Donn' Ama* is spirited and sentimental and brings images of the Naples I like, as does *Scaprecciatello* (Vinto/Albano).

CD 2 is my least favoured because the material is not so much to my personal taste. *Primo Amore*, written by Buti and guitar-accompanied is haunting, and there is much to enjoy.

CD 3 contains five of the Edison Bell recordings, which sound well. The *Ave Maria* of Schubert is beautifully sung with a liquid tone very reminiscent of Gigli. The *Princesita* and *Ideale* are lovely but invite comparisons with Schipa, Borgioli and Fleta to Buti's disadvantage. *Serenade* Pagliacci and *Amor ti Vieta* Fedora, both for Edison Bell and so early in Buti's career sound well, but the star item of the whole side for me is the last *Dove Stu Zaza* – the story of a lost girlfriend, comical and wittily done and which would be accompanied by appropriate funny gestures and faces when performed on stage.

This is then, an excellent package and a credit to the team who produced it. There is one snag for the monoglot English, in that the books are in Italian, though not too difficult for the enthusiast —the discography and pictures are not of course, so there is plenty to enjoy. Well done, Enrico Borsetti and his friends — good value I think at US \$55 — approx. £39! ■

Euan Gibby

**Carlo Buti** – a 3 CD set with three books (in Italian) giving biographical and career details, with photographs and an extensive discography. These are not available separately. The set costs US \$55 from –

Maurizio Tiberi – Edizioni TIMACLUB

ROMA, ITALY.

Tel/fax:

# Obituary

## Geoff Howl

### 1<sup>st</sup> September 1929 – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2001

It was with very great sadness that the Society learned of the death of Geoff Howl. A stalwart supporter of the Midland Area Group, he and his brother, the late Ray Howl, had attended the inaugural meeting of the Group at the Giffards Arms in Wolverhampton in 1968.

It was Geoff, who for over twenty-five years, fulfilled the rôle of Midland Area Group scribe for the HILLANDALE NEWS, faithfully reporting on Group activities. The fact that they didn't always get published was entirely due to the vagaries of our Society editorial policy over the years. You see, whatever Geoff did, he did to the best of his abilities. For the last eight years, he organised the Midlands Group annual Phonofair in Wolverhampton, keeping meticulous accounts of all the income and expenditure. Without his efforts in contacting prospective stall holders, preparing the hall plan and organising the catering, these events would not have been as successful as they have been. For several years, these events were virtually a Howl family affair as Geoff's wife Marjorie and sister-in-law Pat, were responsible for the superb catering.

Geoff joined the Society in 1966 and as noted above was a founder member of the Midland Area Group, being elected to the Committee in 1976. From 1993 until he stood down at the AGM this year, he was the Group Vice-Chairman. Geoff was always ready to help: he provided transport to and from meetings and other events for those members who were without cars. He was always ready to give information on old records and advise on the restoration and repair of old gramophones, as well as encouraging new and possibly less

experienced members. As I know only too well, he was a veritable mine of information on old records of popular music from the early years of the twentieth century. His knowledge of HMV 'B' series dance band issues was legendary amongst all who knew him.

Those of us who have attended the meetings of the Midland Area Group over the last twenty or thirty years will never forget the hilarious quiz evenings organised by Geoff, firstly in conjunction with his brother Ray and then latterly on his own. For several years these were the highlight of the annual programme of meetings. He must have spent hours and hours of his time researching and preparing for these. Nor will we ever forget his fascinating and well-researched record recitals on subjects as diverse as early music hall singers and British dance bands of the 1920s and 1930s.

To say that Geoff was a nice man or merely a good man is a great understatement. Geoff Howl was a **gentle man**, in the truest sense. I cannot recall him losing his temper, raising his voice, swearing (except in the mildest way), or speaking ill of anyone. Even during these last 13 months, when he endured so much, I cannot recall a word of complaint from Geoff. He just took it on the chin and went on with his life, living it to the full.

Geoff Howl was held in great respect by all those who knew him and his passing is going to leave a great hole in the ranks of the CLPGS membership. Our deepest sympathy goes to his wife Marjorie, son Christopher and daughter-in-law Helen. ■

**Phil Bennett**

# Reports

## London; 20<sup>th</sup> February 2001

On Tuesday, 20<sup>th</sup>, Allan Palmer presented the London Meeting's February programme at the Swedenborg Centre on the subject of 'British Contraltos'. Allan's fame as a presenter had gone before him with more chairs being needed before the start of the programme, despite it being a bleak winter's evening.

To warm the members' hearts, the well-loved and – even after half a century – sorely missed ex-GPO telephonist, Kathleen Ferrier opened the evening with *O Thou that tellest glad tidings from Messiah* in a recording dating from 1952, a year before her tragically early death. Gladys Ripley, whilst a very great singer, seemed pale in comparison with her rendering of *Oh peaceful England*, from *Merrie England*, although following any singer other than Ferrier, this would have seemed a touchstone performance. Norma Procter, accompanied by her teacher Alec Redshaw on the piano, sang the traditional ballad *Lord Randall* from 1958, whilst Jean Watson, who was not quite British – being Canadian, – performed a Ferrier favourite, *Che faro* from Gluck's *Orfeo*.

The first half of the evening carried on with contributions from Muriel Brunskill, Phyllis Archibald, Gladys Palmer (no relation), and even Florrie Forde, all presented with Allan's unique and effervescent sense of humour, tempered with a deep knowledge and love of his subject.

After the tea and coffee break, the second half opened with two arias from Gilbert and Sullivan's take-on of Gothic novels, *Ruddigore*. Bertha Lewis performed *Sir Rupert Murgatroyd* from 1920, and was joined in *There grew a little flower* by Darrell Fancourt.

There followed next, Allan's speciality, a selection of Scottish folk songs performed by, amongst others, Margaret Kennedy, Patuffa

Kennedy-Fraser and Anne Ballantine. Songs and Ballads followed next, culminating in a stirring performance of Sullivan's *The Lost Chord*, sung by Mary Jarred, with Bertram Harrison on organ, dating from 1941.

This evening lived up to all Allan's previous programmes, in terms of subject matter, recording quality, breadth of knowledge, wit and sheer good humour. His next programme will be eagerly awaited.

Tim Wood-Woolley

## London; 20<sup>th</sup> March 2001

*Please see the article in this issue, Round the Horn – A Night to Remember, on page 304.*

## London; 17<sup>th</sup> April 2001

The 17<sup>th</sup> April meeting took the form of one of Barry Raynaud's fiendishly difficult quizzes. It was a pleasure to see Barry back on his feet after a bout of illness, which had certainly not dulled his ability to get even the most knowledgeable amongst us scratching our heads.

The questions posed by Barry ranged from Music Hall, classical, 1940s personalities to present day-ish pop. Truly, there was something for everybody. It should come as no surprise, perhaps, that the winner was our very own Patron, Frank Andrews, which gives us lesser mortals something to strive for when Barry next takes the stand to tax our brains and memories.

Many thanks to Barry for the time and effort he has put in to his quiz nights, and we look forward to the next one with trepidation.

Tim Wood-Woolley

## Midlands Group; Birmingham, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2001

An average attendance enjoyed the usual two speakers, this time with a slight difference.

On this occasion, both presenters, Ed Parker and Richard Taylor, used the same title – ‘**Swing It!**’ – and played their musical items alternately.

We had an evening of jazz and swing on 78, LP and CD. Richard covered the period from 1938 to 1945, while Ed dealt with the period from 1945 onwards.

Richard’s more traditional programme included the bands of Count Basie, Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, the Kansas City Seven, pianists Art Tatum, and Nat ‘King’ Cole, and featured vocalists Lee Wiley, Mildred Bailey, Sarah Vaughan and Ivie Anderson.

Among the snippets of gratuitous information that Richard told us about the performers were –

- ◊ singer Lee Wiley, who was part Red Indian, was married for a time to the pianist, Jess Stacy;
- ◊ Charlie Christian, electric guitarist with the Benny Goodman Orchestra died at the age of 24;
- ◊ bassist Slam Stewart (recording with Slim Gaillard as ‘Slim and Slam’) was noted for vocalising an octave above the bass line whilst using the bow on his double bass;
- ◊ Ivie Anderson, vocalist with the Duke Ellington band for eleven years, left the band after recording *Hayfoot, Strawfoot* because of ill-health;
- ◊ vocalist Mildred Bailey, who sang *I Thought About You*, was married to jazz xylophonist Red Norvo.

Ed’s programme dealt with later styles and included continental bands such as Waso (a Belgian quartet), the Brede Big Band (a Danish 10-piece combo), and British representatives such as The Jazz Couriers, the Ronnie Scott Bopset, Carlo Krahmer’s Chicagoans, the outstanding solo pianist Duncan Swift, and vocalist Annie Ross.

Two bands were featured whose pieces were recorded at Birmingham Town Hall, the first

being the Jazz at the Town Hall Ensemble – a Ronnie Scott septet with vocalist Cab Kaye singing *That’s My Desire*; the second, Carlo Krahmer’s Chicagoans, (Humphrey Lyttelton on cornet) with the ODJB number *Bluin’ the Blues*. This was on Esquire 10-001, the very first Esquire record.

Another live recording was *Wee Dot* by the Ronnie Scott Bopset from the Club 11 in Soho, London, in 1949.

This combination of alternative styles from both presenters went very well, and hopefully we might try the idea again on a future occasion.

#### Geoff Howl

#### Midlands Mandrel; Solihull, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2001

After a gap of thirty years, Midlands Mandrel appears again. It was under this heading that reports of the earliest meetings of the Midland Area Group first appeared and following the sad death of Geoff Howl, the pen has again passed to this writer, hopefully temporarily.

The May meeting of the Group was held at a temporary venue in Solihull. As it was the day after Geoff’s funeral it was a somewhat sombre gathering that met to listen to John Dales’ **Cylinder Evening**. As many members will know John has a fascinating collection of early and rare cylinders. For this occasion he transferred a number of Blue Amberols to tape, and we all sat enthralled for nearly 90 minutes.

The recordings heard included some of the earliest Blue Amberols which had originally been issued on wax Amberols and (unusually for 4-minute cylinders) were announced. These included *Home Sweet Home* – *The World Over* and *Cavalry Charge*, both by the Edison Concert Band, the latter title featuring some curious sound effects. Another ‘announced’ cylinder was an early version of Arthur Collins’ performance of *The Preacher and The Bear*. This very popular cylinder was in the Edison catalogue for many years.

John also played some European issues, including Billy Williams' *Little Willie's Wild Woodbines* (originally on a wax Amberol), and a very Teutonic version of *Die Parade der Zinn Soldaten* (The Parade of the Tin Soldiers) by J. Strauss and his Orchestra. *Rule Britannia*, issued in 1914 and recorded by (Albert) Farrington & Chorus, although a British recording, was listed in the general catalogue.

The opera fans in the audience no doubt enjoyed Alessandro Bonci singing *Quando le Sere al Placido*, a 'Royal Purple' issue, and the splendid performance of *Celeste Aida* by Florencio Costantino from the 'Blue' Grand Opera Series.

For the jazz and dance band enthusiasts, the selection included *Footwarmer* by the Louisiana 5 (recorded in 1919) and *Yes Sir, That's my Baby* made in 1925 by the Georgia Melodians – a fine, hot band that only recorded for Edison.

John ended this fascinating and well-researched cylinder recital with an example of an electrically recorded cylinder by B. A. Rolfe and his Orchestra, and a rare and unusual 2-minute Blue Amberol made specifically for the Mexican market.

Phil Bennett

#### **The National Vintage Communications Fair, National Exhibition Centre, Birmingham; 29<sup>th</sup> April 2001**

Once again, the Society was represented at this well-attended Fair, and the Society representatives were kept busy dispensing memberships, information and advice, publications, and some acoustically reproduced music, courtesy of the Society's Expert Junior gramophone.

The sound quality from the Expert Junior again drew much favourable comment. It is noteworthy that significant numbers of visitors have had no previous experience of acoustically reproduced music, whether from disc or, especially, cylinder. This confirms

that the Society has an important rôle to play in keeping knowledge of this technology alive.

**Editor**

#### **Northern Group, Alston Hall, Longridge, Lancashire; 16<sup>th</sup> March 2001**

This meeting involved members' participation on the subject of '**George Formby, Snr. and Jnr.**' Five machines were available – Edison Standard, Edison Home, HMV 104A, a second 104A and an HMV 461. The first three machines were provided by Miles Mallinson, the fourth by Gavin Mist, and the last by John Astin. Despite its being a compromise product to use surplus cabinets made for the short-lived Lumière table model of 1925, the 461 sounded very well. John's example was in fine condition, and looked smart with the mahogany cabinet and gold-plated fittings.

We started with cylinder recordings of Formby Snr, including *Merry Christmas* (on a Sterling), *John Willie Come On* and *When Father Said He'd Pay the Rent* (on Edison).

There followed *I Turned My Trousers Up* (Zonophone), *Funiculi, Funicula* (Jumbo), *I Parted My Hair in the Middle* (Zonophone), and *My Grandfather's Clock* – all discs.

At this point, John Astin gave us a brief résumé of Formby Snr.'s career. Born in 1877 at Ashton-under-Lyne as James Henry Booth, he took Formby as a stage name. One of the most popular music hall acts, he recorded between 1906 and 1920, making cylinders for Edison and Sterling, and discs for many firms, including Ariel, Odeon, Pathé, and Zonophone. He died in January 1921 while working in a pantomime in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

John then played *Standing at the Corner of the Street* (Ariel). Finally, we had *John Willie's Rag-time Band* (Zonophone) and *I Began to Run* (Jumbo).

After a short break, we came to George, Jnr. First was one of his very early recordings, from May 1926, *John Willie Come On* (Edison Bell). This was clearly an imitation of his father. Then, from September 1929, we heard *In The Congo* (Dominion), which was in a different, and rather untypical style.

There followed two from his early years with Decca – *Chinese Blues* (1932) and *In My Little Wigan Garden*. Next came *When the Waterworks Caught Fire*, *Our Sergeant Major*, *You'd be Far Better Off in a Home*, and *Mad March Hare* (all Regal Zonophone).

From the war years we heard *Spotting on Blackpool Tower*, *I Did What I Could With My Gas Mask*, *Frank in his Tank*, and *Out in the Middle East*. Perhaps this was his best period.

We heard one post-war recording – *You Don't Need a Licence for That* (Columbia, 1946).

Finally, came a 'duet' – on the two 104As – with a synchronised (well, almost!) playing of two copies of *Grandad's Flannelette Nightshirt*.

During the second part of the meeting, Paul Royal and other members reminisced about Formby Jnr's life, career and huge popularity. Books on the Formbys and sheet music were on display.

Twenty-one members then enjoyed a fine evening meal provided by Alston Hall, followed by an informal gathering, during which members played some favourite records.

#### John Hopkins

#### West of England Group, Mount, Bodmin, Cornwall; 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2001

Paul Collenette, our newly appointed secretary, opened the meeting – our first to be held in Cornwall. He reported however, that unfortunately, two members were unable to attend due to the national foot-and-mouth disease restrictions.

Our venue on this occasion was at Mount, near Bodmin, at the rural retreat of Graham and Annie Ovenden. Readers will undoubtedly know Graham as an artist of renown, and that his paintings have been widely exhibited. It was he who was responsible for the cover painting on the EMI publication, *The Incredible Music Machine*.

From his very extensive collection, Graham took the theme of 'War' to start his presentation. The discs were reproduced electrically, to advantage, on a Rega Planar 78 deck. To reflect the non-standard turntable speeds of the era, anything between 62 and 110 rpm, the Rega used a calibrated variable frequency power source. We thus heard every item at their intended speed.

The first item was a Berliner of 1899, from the Boer War era. It was a studio reconstruction of the 'front', appropriately entitled *Battlefield*, which came across surprisingly well for a record over 100 years old. The second, another Berliner, was a best-seller of its day, sung by Leo Stormont. Recorded in 1900, it featured the well-known song, *Goodbye Dolly Gray*. Could that have been Fred Gaisberg on piano? –

Moving on to the First World War, we heard an upmarket version of *Over There* from a fine Columbia 'A' series disc (A2470) by Arthur Fields. The diction and clarity of the performance was remarkably good. The last of the selection from this period was an HMV recording of *The Starlight Express* (the original version!) with Agnes Nicholls and Charles Mott. This was a composition by Elgar, *libretto* by Blackwood, to help lighten the dark days of war. As an introduction, Graham read out a moving letter written to Elgar by an officer at the front. In it, he described how, with the aid of his unit's gramophone, Elgar's work had indeed uniquely managed to raise his spirits. We had therein a momentary glimpse of the obviously desperate conditions in the trenches. This was from 1916, two years into the war. As it had yet another two years to run, one was left

wondering what subsequently became of that officer.

The date, 1916, was also very significant for what then followed, as Graham moved on to the subject of '**Jazz**'. From that time on, it was to owe much of its continued existence and expansion, to the gramophone. It had, unlike other forms of musical expression of the time, very few other means of exposure to public audience. (The coming of radio broadcasts in the 1920s did not improve the situation either, as it was virtually ignored on that medium.)

The first side which we heard, was another fine Columbia 'A' series (A3995) from 1923. It was *Dicty Blues* from Fletcher Henderson, a good example of a performance from a coloured band of the era. This was then contrasted with the performance of a comparable white band, and we heard another Columbia recording (48-D) which was from Ted Lewis, with *Stepping Out*. The section concluded with a number from Ollie Power, *Play That Thing*, on a Paramount disc. Graham informed us that this particular recording was the sixth 'take' of the performance.

We then took a break from listening to recorded music, and were able to enjoy another art form – visual. We were shown a selection of records featuring large Art and Art Deco labels, which appeared almost as fresh and bright as they must have looked eighty years ago. They were all from overseas sources, and included Pathé, Orpheon (Russian), Aerophone, Polydor and Deutsche Grammophon. The latter was of interest because the Gramophone Company's logo had been changed, during the First World War, and the familiar picture was here, minus 'Nipper'. It made a bizarre and comical label. Had Nipper gone 'walkies'? Fallen into the envelope? We looked everywhere.

Back to music, we had a *finale* of miscellaneous items. Graham talked about the tonal range of some continental recordings and illustrated this with an Odéon acoustic recording (1923) (LXX 80970) of *The Magic*

*Flute*. The next one caused much interest as it was dedicated to the loss of the *Titanic* in 1912, and was produced within five weeks of the sinking. We heard *Be British and Stand To Your Post* by Ernest Gray on Winner 2144. To further enhance the theme, Graham passed round items of ephemera for us to inspect – photographs, newspaper cuttings, prayer cards, memorial and post cards that were produced at the time. The last recorded item which we heard, was intended to be something of a (technical) puzzle for us. We were informed that it was an early Polydor recording of Beethoven (69856) with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. But what was the apparent contradiction? Graham enlightened us – the recording was acoustic, but the bass response was like that of a later electric one. The only thing which differentiated it was arguably, that the response in the higher registers was inferior to an electric recording. Therein lies food for thought – how had the Polydor engineers achieved this and why? The acoustic reproducing machines of the era would hardly have done justice to the bass in any case.

Our meeting concluded with buffet-style refreshments, which were provided by our hospitable hosts. Paul thanked both Graham and Annie, on behalf of the Group for a most memorable and enjoyable meeting. He further communicated our appreciation to Graham for sharing with us some of his formidable store of knowledge of the many aspects of recorded music, and his passion for preserving our musical heritage.

**Geoff Parr**

#### **West of England Group; Portishead, Bristol, 12<sup>th</sup> May 2001**

Bernie Brown and Ann Gunn again welcomed us to their historic 18<sup>th</sup> century house – which has the amount of space that most of us collectors can only dream about! The grounds overlook the beautiful Gordano Valley, and as the weather was splendid, we were able to enjoy some of the event outdoors.

Bernie's subject was '**From Clara to Ketelbey**': Dame Clara Butt (vocalist) and Albert W. Ketelbey (composer) were contemporaries. Bernie told us that his interest in Clara Butt was sparked off by a real curiosity – a 58-note organ roll labelled 'to accompany HMV record 0319' – Clara Butt singing *Abide with me*. We heard the record played on an HMV table model gramophone model 109. One member suggested trying to synchronise the roll on the Orchestrelle, but the offer was (probably wisely) not taken up.

Next, we listened to Clara Butt's husband Kennerley Rumford, who joined in the vocal with the Mrs. in *Friendship* (Col 7269). Bernie has a gramophone which once belonged to Mr. Rumford.

Then we moved on to composer, organist and conductor, Albert W. Ketelbey. He was a native of Birmingham who made a speciality of *intermezzi* and descriptive music. At the music college he attended, he scored higher marks for composition than Gustav Holst... His most famous piece is *In a Monastery Garden*, which we heard by the Peerless Orchestra on Blue Amberol. On discs it is often backed by *In a Persian Market*, which

was played to us on Winner 5197 by the Scots Guards.

Mr. Ketelbey was Musical Director of various record companies – e.g., Regal (1913-1923) and Indestructible, and we heard him conduct his own orchestra in the lovely *Sanctuary of the heart* on Columbia 9405. The disc was recorded in the late 1920s, but must have been popular enough to remain in the catalogue for 20 years or more, as this seemed to be a 1940s/50s pressing.

For one of the *Monastery Garden* records, Bernie activated a clockwork singing bird for accompaniment (laughter!).

Ketelbey's music was clearly much favoured by organists, of whom we heard several, though probably the most curious was AWK himself playing *Marche aux flambeaux* on a reed organ for Indestructible (cylinder). This, and his Indestructible Orchestra in *Balkan Princess* (Rubens), was played on an Amberola X phonograph.

This ended a most interesting and enjoyable programme, though the party continued outdoors; many thanks to Bernie and Ann for their hospitality.

**Paul Collenette**

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# Letters

## Change the names? no. 1

On the suggestions for name changes to HILLANDALE NEWS and CLPGS, here are some thoughts.

As the magazine is distributed only to members of CLPGS, the fact that 'HILLANDALE' does not immediately connect with 'gramophones' is of no importance and, in fact, the rather curious name is quite in character with the contents. Only if HILLANDALE had to compete on news stands with other magazines, would the name be a disadvantage. I vote for keeping it.

The point has been made that there are potential members out there who have never heard of CLPGS. I only found about it while reading the Shire Album's list for something else entirely, when I came across Bergonzi's *Old Gramophones* with the CLPGS reference in the back. But if CLPGS is going to make itself known it only has to do so under the particular interest, say, 'antique gramophones' or 'early sound records' and the CLPGS title would follow whether on Internet (if it is entered) or in adverts in other magazines. So from that point of view, the CLPGS title, or that of HILLANDALE NEWS, can be retained.

However, I am in agreement about the 'City of London' bit being redundant and I have sometimes wondered how many potential members may have been put off by the apparently exclusive nature of these three words, particularly those to the north and even beyond Hadrian's Wall. So perhaps 'C.L.' could be dropped, provided that the trouble in changing the registered title is not too great. Whether it should be replaced with 'Great Britain', 'United Kingdom' or 'The Isles West of Brussels' is beyond me.

Much of this discussion appears to have arisen from our Chairman's push for 'modernising', so, as I have shown some resistance, I hasten to add that HILLANDALE

NEWS, the new Members List, the quality of illustrations (not to mention the recent cover photo) are splendid and all those hard-working souls who have made these improvements have my vote of appreciation and thanks.

A last thought: would it not be a good idea to have an Application and Subscription Form at the back of every issue of HILLANDALE NEWS, on the last page where no information would be lost by its removal, so that it would be easily available. It could also be used as a reminder to existing members to pay up.

Eric Smith;

[REDACTED] ANTIGUA, West Indies.

## Change the names? No. 2

As we are currently the only members to reside within reach of the CITY of London, but we do not possess a phonograph, we see nothing wrong with the *status quo* (good pop group) as HILLANDALE is synonymous with CLPGS. If anything needs changing it may be to replace 'City of London' with 'British' to become BPGS (this does not stand for British Petroleum Gas Station!) but is nationwide covering all the British Isles. BUT, at the end of the day, WHY change anything? If it ain't broken, don't interfere!

Eddie & Elaine Shaw;

## From 'Crapophone' to 'Portacrap'

A customer from Scotland phoned me a couple of days ago and relayed the following tale. He had attended an antique fair and seen an immaculate HMV 102 in black, so good that he thought it was wrong. The only thing wrong was that the machine had been completely refurbished, new rexine, motor board re-polished, etc., etc.

At the next fair, he saw at the same dealers' stall, an immaculate red HMV 102, in the same condition as the black 102.

Now, you are wondering why I should complain.

The first machine was embossed, 'Rolls Royce'.

The second machine was embossed 'MG'.

Both of these portable machines were offered at £400.

These are **FAKES**. And should not be considered at any price. The origins of the machines would have been HMV gramophones, but not with these badges on them.

And as for replacing a needle to make it a Crapophone, your correspondent, I think, does not have any idea of what he is talking about.

If anyone out there has been caught with these fakes, then **THEY WILL KNOW WHAT I AM SAYING**.

Please beware.

Ken Priestley;  
Holmfirth Antiques, West Yorkshire.

### A Strange Instruction – Reply

The sleeve mentioned contained a flexible all-picture Trusound-made disc from 1930 carrying matrix OC.13A/14-2A. The old needle instruction was presumably to avoid damaging the flimsy recorded film, which obviously a new needle would do.

Eddie & Elaine Shaw;

### Re – We Also Have Our Own Records, part 16

With reference to **fmp Technidisc**, (HILLANDALE NEWS no. 233, p.270) the Farley 31-page catalogue of May 1951 indicates three 10" series, viz., TD.101-10, TDA.501-2, TS.8001.

Re page 272 – **Freemasons Hospital & Nursing Home** – We have a copy of this disc, the Part 1 label outer ring stating at the top 'OBTAINABLE ONLY FROM THE PRODUCER' and the lower outer ring 'W. G. WALLACE,

WOODCUT, MAIDSTONE ROAD, CHATHAM'. This side has matrix CP.140, and the side pictured [p. 273] CP.141, and dates from c.1933/4.

Page 273 – **French Made Easy** – This set of five discs with matrix/sides numbered FR M E 1E-10E were made in March 1933 by Lingraphone.

Page 274, last paragraph – 'the CP prefixes were continued in use into the 1950s': we are aware that they continued into the 1960s on 45s, highest known from *circa* 1963 is OCP.2389 on single-sided introduction to Winston J. Churchill. We are trying to compile a full listing of all CP matrices from Imperial C.1 via Crystalate to Decca OCP.2389 – any help appreciated.

Eddie & Elaine Shaw

*Editors' Note re fmp Technidisc – From a copy of TDA.501 in the possession of one of the Editors, we print here a scanned image of the A-side label, which is printed in crimson on a white background. Note that this differs from the label description given by Frank Andrews in part 16 of his series. The rhythm accompaniment is in a modern jazz style. The B-side is September in the Rain, both titles being popular in the late 1940s/early 1950s.*



# The CLPGS Bookshop

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**ZONOPHONE double-sided records for Season 1913/1914.** Reproduction disc catalogue, containing 80 pages of recordings plus index. Cost £4-00. Ref. no. CL-40.

**CINCH 10" double-sided records – Arthur Badrock and Frank Andrews.** A5 format, 58 pages listing output. Monochrome example of label on cover; first supplement advert featuring Billy Williams inside. Cost £6-00. Ref. no. CL-52.

**BRUNSWICK 10" '100' series.** A5 listing by Arthur Badrock. 11 pages plus index. Cost £2-00. Ref. no. CL-50.

**EDISON BELL 'ELECTRON'.** A5 listing by Arthur Badrock. 13 pages plus index. Cost £2-00. Ref. no. CL-51.

**EDISON PHONOGRAPHS.** Reproduction machine catalogue, 3½" x 6". 31 pages with coloured paper cover. Talks about the new Amberol record which plays for 4½ minutes. Spring and Electric motors (3 types). Details with pictures of the Gem, Standard, Home, Triumph, Idelia, Alva. Plus details only on the Balmoral & Conqueror. Styles of soundboxes, home recording and cylinders. Pre-dates item CL-23 of c. 1909. Cost £3-00 plus postage. Ref. no. CL-53.

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George Woolford

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